



﴿ فضائل رمضان المبارك ﴾

VIRTUES of the Holy month of RAMADAN

by

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Another point that is brought to our notice in the *Hadith* is that Rasoolullah ﷺ informed us that any nafl deed in *Ramadhan* is rewarded as much as a fardh in normal times, whereas a fardh in *Ramadhan* carries the reward of seventy faraa'id of other times.

OUR FAULTS

At this point we should ponder over our ibaadah. How much importance do we attach to it in *Ramadhan*? How much nafl do we perform? As for fardh deeds we observe how numerous people who after having eaten sehri (sower—suhoor), get back into bed with the result that Fajr salaah goes by without being performed. Many perform it, but not with jama'ah. It gives the impression that we give thanks to Allah for the food we had eaten at sehri by not performing the most important fardh or by not performing it with jama'ah. It remains incomplete. Rasoolullah ﷺ said that: "There is no salaah for those near the masjid except in the masjid."

In the kitaab 'Mazaahire Haq' we find that when a person, without any valid excuse, performs salaah without jama'ah, the fardh has been performed; however reward for the salaah is not received.

Similarly, in numerous cases at the time of iftaar (boka) Maghrib salaah is missed, and many who do come to the masjid miss the takbeer at the beginning or miss the first rak'ah. Many people because of the Taraweeh salaah even perform Eshaa salaah before the time. (Some do not pay any attention to salaah even in *Ramadhan*.)

That is the way we look after our ibaadah in *Ramadhan*. Sometimes in order to perform one fardh three are destroyed. How often do we not see even Zuhr salaah going by because we are asleep, while Asr goes by because we are too busy buying, selling and cooking to prepare for iftaar.

If such is the case with the faraa'id, then we can imagine how much less importance is given to the nafl actions. One finds that because of sleep, Salaatul Ishraq (after sunrise) and Salaatul Duha (before noon) go by. Then what about Salaatul Awwaabeen (just

after Maghrib)? Here we find ourselves busy with iftaar and when thinking about Taraweeh after about an hour this salaah too is wasted. Further we find that for Salaatut Tahajjud the time is the same as that for sehri with the result that this too goes by. One may make a thousand excuses for not finding time for these nawaa'fil, yet we see that there are many who do find the time to do all these ibaadah's during these precious moments.

I personally had observed my ustaaz Mau'ana Khalil Ahmad RA. during many *Ramadhans*. He was a weak, sickly person of advanced age but in spite of that he used to read one and a quarter juz of the *Qur'aan*, in nafl namaaz after Maghrib. Thereafter he used to eat for about half an hour. After performing all other necessities in preparation for Taraweeh salaah he used to stand in Taraweeh for about two and half hours while in India, and for three hours while residing in Medina Munawwarah. Thereafter he used to sleep for about two or three hours (according to the season). Then again he used to recite the *Qur'aan* in Tahajjud salaah until about half an hour before Fajr. Then he ate sehri. From that time until Fajr he remained busy with reading of the *Qur'aan* or reciting of wazifas. With the greyness of dawn he performed Fajr salaah, whereafter he remained in meditation (muraaqabah) until ishraq. Having performed ishraq he used to write his famous kitaab, 'Bazlul Majhood' commentary on Abu Dawood. Then he normally attended to letters and dictating replies. From Asr until Maghrib he used to be busy with thinking and answering the queries of those who visited him. When he completed 'Bazlul Majhood' he used to be busy studying some monumental religious works. This was his daily programme throughout the year. In *Ramadhan* however, he used to spend a bit more time in his ibaadah, making the rak'ahs longer. Our other great saintly men used to take the same care or even more. Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hassan (rahmatullahi alaihi) used to remain in nafl salaah from after Taraweeh until Fajr, while also listening to the *Qur'aan* recited by various huffaaz one after the other.

Maulana Shah Abdurrahim Raipuri (d 1967) remained busy with tilaawah (recitation) of the *Qur'aan* day and night throughout *Ramadhan*. There used to be no time for attending to correspon-

dence or meeting visitors. Only his very special ones were allowed to wait on him after Taraweeh for a short period while he drank a cup of tea.

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ADVICE

The reason for mentioning the manner in which these saintly ones spent their *Ramadhan* is not that we may just read without deriving any benefit. It is written with the object that we in our own way may build up courage and to the best of our ability endeavour to copy and follow their noble examples. How wonderful would it be if those who are not forced by worldly necessities, try their utmost to mend their religious life in this one month after having allowed eleven months of the year to destroy themselves.

As for those who have to be in their offices and in service at eight, nine or ten in the morning, what difficulty will it be for them if they at least in *Ramadhan*, spend the time from Fajr until their service time by reciting the *Qur'aan*. After all for our worldly needs we do find time in spite of office hours.

As for those engaged in farming, who normally are in no one's service, nothing prevents them from reciting their *Qur'aan* in any portion of their farm. Then comes the businessmen, shopkeepers and merchants. Nothing prevents them in *Ramadhan* from reciting their *Qur'aan* during their shop hours or cutting short trading time in order to make time for the recitation thereof. After all there is a very great link between *Ramadhan* and the tilaawah of the *Qur'aan*. Almost all Allah's great Divine Scriptures were revealed in this month. Similarly the *Qur'aan* in this month was brought down from the Al Iowhul Mahfuz to the Sama'ud Duniyaa, from where it was revealed bit by bit to Rasulullah ﷺ throughout a span of twenty three years.

Nabi Ibrahim (alayhis salaam) received his scriptures on the twelfth or eighteenth. Nabi Moosa (alayhis salaam) received his Towrah on the sixth. Nabi Eesa (alayhis salaam) received the Injeel on the twelfth or thirteenth. From this we note the great connection between the Divine Scriptures and the month of *Ramadhan*. For

this reason, as much tilaawah of the *Qur'aan* should be made as possible during this month. Such was the habit of our saints. Jibra'il AS. used to recite the whole *Qur'aan* to our Nabi Muhammad ﷺ in the month of *Ramadhan*. In some reports it is stated that Rasulullah ﷺ used to recite and he (Jibra'il AS.) used to listen. From joining these reports the ulama have said that it is mustahab to read the *Qur'aan* in such a manner that while one recites the others listen. Thereafter another recites while others listen. So recite the *Qur'aan* as much as possible. Whatever time remains thereafter should not be wasted.

Rasulullah ﷺ drew our attention to four more things and advised that we should practise them as much as possible. They are the recitation of Kalima Tayyiba, Istighfaar, begging for paradise and seeking refuge from Jahannam. What is so difficult about keeping the tongue busy with the recitation of durood (salawaat) or Laa ilaaha il'lal Laah while being engaged in our daily tasks? In the same *Hadith* Rasulullah ﷺ said a few more things: *Ramadhan* is the month of patience. Hence even if great difficulty is experienced in fasting one should bear it with patience. One should not complain as people are fond of doing during hot days. Similarly, should difficulty be experienced at the time of Taraweeh, it too should be borne with patience. Do not consider it a great calamity or trial; otherwise these deeds may be rejected by Allah. When we turn our backs on wordly things, forsake our very eating and drinking, for the sake of earning Allah's pleasure, then in the face of Allah's pleasure what are these difficulties?

SYMPATHY FOR THE UNFORTUNATE

Further, the *Hadith* states that it is the month of sympathy, especially for the poor and destitute. Sympathy should be of a practical nature. When ten things are placed before us for iftaar, at least two or four of them should be set aside for the poor and needy. They should definitely be remembered. In showing sympathy for the poor, as in all other matters, the sahaaba were living examples, and in this, it is our duty to follow or at least try to

follow them. Let us see the following example: Abu Jahm RA. relates that during the battle of Yarmouk he went in search of his cousin taking with him a bag of water so as to give him to drink and wash his wounds if he was found alive and wounded. He found him lying among the wounded. "When I asked him whether he wanted some water, he indicated, 'Yes'. At that moment someone near him moaned. My cousin pointed to that person indicating that I should first quench the thirst of the neighbour. I went to him and found that he too needed water, but just as I was about to give him water, a third person groaned near him. The second one pointed to this third one meaning that I should give the third one to drink first. I went to the third one but before he could drink, I found that he had passed away, whereupon I returned to the second one only to find that he too had passed away. When I came to my cousin, he too had become a martyr."

This is the type of sympathetic character our forefathers had. May Allah be pleased with them all and grant us ability to follow in their footsteps.

In another *Hadith* it is stated that whosoever feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and grants refuge to the traveller, Allah shall save him from the terrors of Qiyaamah.

Yahya Barmaki used to grant Imaam Sufyaan Thowri one thousand Dirhams every month, whereupon Imaam Sufyaan used to prostrate himself before Allah praying: "O Allah, Yahya has seen sufficiently to my worldly needs. See You, through Your Great Mercy, to his necessities in the Hereafter." After the death of Yahya some people saw him in their dreams and on inquiring what had happened to him in the Hereafter, he replied: "Through the prayers of Sufyaan I have been forgiven by Allah."

Further, Rasulullah ﷺ mentioned the virtue of feeding a fasting person at the time of breaking the *fast*. In one *Hadith* it is reported that upon him who feeds a person to break the *fast* out of his *halaal* earnings, the angels spread mercy; and on the night of Laylatal Qadar Jibra'il AS. shakes hands with him. The sign of this is that his heart becomes soft while tears freely flow from his eyes.

Hammaad bin Salamah, a very famous muhaddith used to feed fifty people every day during *Ramadhan* at iftaar. ('Rahul Bayaan').

Thereafter, the *Hadith* of Rasulullah ﷺ called the first section of *Ramadhan* the coming of Mercy, whereby it is meant that Allah's favour is with the believers. Those who are thankful to Allah for His bounties, receive more. The *Qur'aan* says: "If you are thankful, I will surely grant you more."

During the second section of *Ramadhan* forgiveness begins to descend as a reward for the fasting during the first section. The last section of *Ramadhan* brings immunity from entrance into Jahannam. This is corroborated by many similar Ahaadith. In my personal opinion *Ramadhan* has been divided into three sections because people are normally of three different kinds. Firstly, there are those who have no burden of sins. For them during the very beginning of *Ramadhan* Allah's Mercy and bounties descend. Secondly, there are those whose burden of sins are not too heavy. For them forgiveness descends after one third of *Ramadhan* has passed. Thirdly, there are the real sinners. For them forgiveness comes after having fasted the major section of *Ramadhan*. As for those who attained Allah's Mercy right at the beginning, they are the successful ones. (And Allah knows best).

Another point mentioned in the Ahaadith is that masters should be lenient with their servants in *Ramadhan* because, after all, they too are fasting. Unnecessary hard work or too much of it will be a burden to them. So why should an extra worker not be hired when work is too much? That of course only applies when the servant himself fasts; otherwise there is no difference for them between *Ramadhan* and any other month.

Lastly, in the *Hadith*: Rasulullah ﷺ exhorted that four things should be repeated constantly. Firstly: the recitation of Kalima Tayyiba, which in the Ahaadith is called the highest form of zikr. In 'Mishkaat' Abu Saeed Khudari ؓ reports; "Once Nabi Moosa (alayhis salaam) begged of Allah to grant him a special prayer by which he can remember Allah and also ask him." Then Allah

٢. عن أبي هريرة قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: أعطيت أمتي خمس خصال في رمضان لم تعطهن أمة قبلهم، خلوف فم الصائم أطيب عند الله من ريح المسك، وتستغفر لهم الحيتان حتى يفطروا، ويزين الله عز وجل كل يوم جنته ثم يقول: يوشك عبادي الصالحون أن يلقوا عنهم المؤنة ويصيروا إليك، وتصفد فيه مردة الشياطين فلا يخلصوا فيه إلى ما كانوا يخلصون إليه في غيره، ويغفر لهم في آخر ليله، قيل: يا رسول الله! أهى ليلة القدر؟ قال: لا ولكن العامل إذا بوفى أجره إذا قضى عمله. - رواه أحمد والبخاري، ورواه أبو الشيخ ابن حبان في «كتاب الثواب» إلا عنده «وتستغفر لهم الملائكة» بدل «الحيتان».

HADITH NO. 2

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه relates that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "My ummah were given five things which were not given to anyone except them. For them, the smell from the mouth of a fasting person is more sweeter in the sight of Allah than the fragrant smell of musk. On their behalf the fish in the sea seek forgiveness until they break their *fast*. Allah prepares and decorates a special garden in Jannah everyday and then says (to it): 'The time is near when My faithful servants shall cast aside the great trials (of the world) and come to you.' In this month (for them) evil-minded shaytaan is chained so as not to reach unto those evils to which they normally reach during other months besides *Ramadhan*. On the last night of *Ramadhan* they are forgiven."

The sahaaba thereupon inquired: "O Messenger of Allah, is that last night *Laylutul Qadr*?" Rasulullah ﷺ replied: "No. But it is only right that a servant should be given his reward on having completed his service."

COMMENTARY

Rasulullah ﷺ mentions in the *Hadith* five such presents from Allah which were not granted to the fasting people before Islam. If only we can truly appreciate how great this bounty from Allah really is, and if only we could sincerely try to gain those special favours. Firstly, we are told that the smell from the mouth of the fasting one is more beloved and sweeter in Allah's sight than the smell of musk. The commentators mention eight meanings to this. Of these, three are the most acceptable explanations: (a) Some are of the opinion that in the Hereafter Allah shall reward that smell from the mouth with fragrant scents more sweet and pleasing than musk. (b) On the day of Qiyaamah when we shall rise from the grave such a sweet smell shall emanate from the mouth of those who fasted which shall be better than musk. (Durre Manthur) (c) The version which in my opinion is most acceptable, is the view that in the world the smell is more fragrant than musk. This shows the bond of love between Allah and His fasting creatures.

We all know that even a bad smell from one whom one loves truly and sincerely is in itself beloved in the sight of the lover, who in this case is Allah Himself. Fasting is one of the most accepted forms of *ibaadah* in Allah's sight. For this reason the *Hadith* states that the reward for every deed is brought by the angels, but Allah says: "The reward for fasting, I Myself will give, because it is for Me alone." Another version of the same *Hadith* (when read in a different way) says: "I Myself become his reward." And what greater reward can there be for the lover than to gain the Beloved? In one *Hadith* we read: "Fasting is the door to all other forms of *ibaadah*." This means that through fasting the heart becomes enlightened through which one's desire is awakened towards Allah. This is the case only if fasting becomes fasting in the true sense of the word with all its requirements (as shall be explained later), and not just remaining hungry and thirsty.

NOTE: At this juncture I wish to draw attention to one point. Because of this *Hadith* some imaams (especially Imaam Shafi'ee) prohibited cleansing of teeth with miswaak in the afternoon, whereas the Hanafis consider it to be *mustahab* at all times. The Imaam's reason that through miswaak the smell from the teeth is

removed, whereas Hanafis maintain that the odour referred to here is the smell resulting from the stomach being empty, having nothing to do with miswaak.

The second special favour is that fish in the sea make Istighfaar for him who fasts. The aim here is to explain that many beings offer prayer on his behalf. My uncle, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas RA. used to say that this is apparently so because Allah says in the *Qur'aan*: "Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, Allah shall make them beloved (in this world)." One *Hadith* clarifies this: "When Allah loves a person, He says to Jibra'il: 'I love that person, you should also love him.'" Jibra'il then also loves that person and announces in the heavens: "That person is loved by Allah. You all should love him." Thereupon all the inmates of the heavens begin to love him. Then, love for that person spreads on earth." Normally only those who are near to a person seem to love him but here that love spreads all over, even the animals in the jungles and the fish in the sea do the same. They all then pray on his behalf.

The third favour bestowed on the fasting ones is that Jannah becomes decorated for them. Another *Hadith* states that at the beginning of every year, Jannah begins to be adorned for *Ramadhan*. We know that when a great person is expected to arrive, great care is taken in the preparations for his coming. At the time of marriage for example, preparations commence months in advance. Likewise it is with *Ramadhan*.⁴

The fourth favour is that the rebellious, evil sowing shaytaan are chained, (detained), as a result of which evil is diminished. One would expect that because of the great desire for ibaadah in the blessed month of *Ramadhan*, shaytaan would try just as hard to pull the faithful from their path so that much more evil would be committed. That is not the case. On the contrary we see so much less evil. How many drunkards do we not see who just because of the blessed month of *Ramadhan* do not drink any wine. How many other evil doers do we not see casting aside evil just because of the blessed month of *Ramadhan*. A question may arise here, that when the shaytaans are chained, how is it that we still do see evil committed even though to a lesser degree? Our reply is that evil

may not necessarily be caused by the shaytaans. Having for eleven months lived in obedience to shaytaan's whims and wishes and because of the performance of deeds advised by him having become second nature to us, evil is being done in and out of *Ramadhan*. For this reason we see those who normally commit evil do still commit some of it in *Ramadhan*. Thus even though shaytaan has been chained, his influence in us has become so strong that on our own accord we follow his path.

Another answer to the question is: Rasulullah ﷺ said that: "When a person commits a sin, a black spot forms on his heart. When he sincerely repents, it is removed, otherwise it remains. When he again commits a sin another spot forms until his heart becomes completely black. Then no good can reach his heart." Referring to this Allah says in the *Qur'aan*: "By no means. But on their hearts is the stain (of the Ill)." That their hearts have become totally rusted. In such cases these hearts have a natural inclination towards sin. This is the reason that many people fearlessly commit one type of sin, but yet if confronted with another sin of similar magnitude then their hearts repudiate it. Like those who drink wine, if told to eat pork, they detest it. Whereas in sin these two misdeeds are equal. Similarly, when these sins are constantly committed out of *Ramadhan*, the heart is tinted by them, thus resulting in these sins being committed without the presence of the shaytaan. My personal opinion is that not all shaytaans are chained. Only the most rebellious ones are. All of us can see that in *Ramadhan* it does not require a great amount of effort and exertion to do any good deed. Neither does it require a great self control and sacrifice to avoid evil as in other times. Maulana Shah Ishaq was of the opinion that for the evil ones only the most rebellious shaytaans are chained whereas for the righteous ones all shaytaans are chained.

The fifth favour is that forgiveness is granted on the final night of *Ramadhan* (see previous *Hadith*); because of this great favour the sahaaba thought that, that must be *Laylatul Qadr*, they knew the great blessings of that night and accordingly asked whether that was *Laylatul Qadr*. The reply was that it was not. This is merely the favour granted for having given *Ramadhan* its due right to the end.

٣. عن كعب بن عجرة قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: أحضروا المنبر! فحضرنا، فلما ارتقى درجة قال: آمين، فلما ارتقى الدرجة الثانية قال: آمين، فلما ارتقى الدرجة الثالثة قال: آمين، فلما نزل قلنا: يا رسول الله! لقد سمعنا منك اليوم شيئاً ما كنا نسمعه. قال: إن جبريل عرض لي، فقال: بعد من أدرك رمضان فلم يُغفر له. قلت: آمين، فلما رقيت الثانية، قال: بعد من ذكرت عنده فلم يصل عليك. قلت: آمين، فلما رقيت الثالثة، قال: بعد من أدرك أبويه الكبر أو أحدهما فلم يدخله الجنة، قلت: آمين. - رواه الحاكم وقال: صحيح الإسناد، وكذا في «الترغيب» وقال السخاوي: رواه ابن حبان في ثقافته وصحيحه، والطبراني في الكبير والبخاري في بر الوالدين له. والبيهقي في الشعب وغيرهم ورجاله ثقات. وبسط طرقة، وروى الترمذي عن أبي هريرة بمعناه. وقال ابن حجر: طرقة كثيرة كما في «المرواة»

HADITH NO. 3

Kaab bin Ujra رضي الله عنه relates "Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Come near to the mimbar." And we came near the mimbar. When he ascended the first step of the mimbar he said: "Aameen". When he ascended the second step he said: "Aameen". When he ascended the third step he said: "Aameen". When he descended we said: "O Rasul of Allah, we have heard from you today something which we never heard before." He said "(When I ascended the first step) Jibra'il appeared before me and said: "Woe to him who found the blessed month of *Ramadhan* and let it pass by without gaining forgiveness." Upon that I said: "Aameen". When I ascended the second step, he said: "Woe to him before whom thy name is mentioned and then does not read durood (salawaat) on you". I

replied: "Aameen". When I ascended the third step he said: "Woe unto him in whose presence his parents or one of them attain old age, and (through failure to serve them) is not allowed to enter Jannah." I said "Aameen".

COMMENTARY

In this *Hadith* it appears that Jibra'il alayhis salaam expressed three curses upon which Rasulullah ﷺ said: 'Aameen' ever, time. In Durre Manthur it is reported that Jibra'il AS. commanded Rasulullah ﷺ to say Aameen. Being an angel of such high stature, Jibra'il AS.'s duaas for the acceptance of his curses are sure to be accepted. May Allah in His infinite Mercy grant us help and save us from these dangers.

The first person finds himself in *Ramadhan*, the month of blessings and righteousness, and still spends the days in sin and disregards his duties, thus does not gain forgiveness. *Ramadhan* is the month of Allah's Mercy and if this month is spent in evil and negligence, then how can he expect to be pardoned for his sins? If he cannot gain Allah's pleasure in *Ramadhan*, then when will he? Moreover, in *Ramadhan* numerous opportunities are found for forgiveness.

The second unfortunate person is he who hears Rasulullah's ﷺ name mentioned and yet does not recite durood on him. For this reason some ulama consider it waajib to read durood whenever the name Muhammad (ﷺ) is mentioned. In some Ahaadith the person who fails to do so is called an unfortunate and a miser.

At some places such people are even mentioned among those who lost the way to Jannah, or among those who will enter Jahannam, and those who will not look upon the blessed face of Rasulullah ﷺ. The ulama give us different interpretations of these Ahaadith. The fact still remains that failure to read durood is indeed very unfortunate. And why not? After all said and done, the favours bestowed upon this ummah through Rasulullah ﷺ are of such a nature that neither pens nor lectures can do justice in describing them. His favours on us are indeed great. On the other hand the reward for durood (salawaat) is tremendous. The *Hadith*

teaches us that: Whosoever recites one durood on Rasulullah ﷺ, on him Allah sends ten mercies and for him the Mala'ikah make duaa. All his sins are forgiven, his rank is elevated, reward is received as much as Mount Uhud, and on his behalf Rasulullah ﷺ shall intercede (shafaa'at) on the day of Qiyaamah. Further promises of reward are: Attaining Allah's pleasure, mercy and immunity against His anger; safety from the terrors of Qiyaamah; seeing one's promised place in Jannah even while on this earth. Besides these there is the promise of not ever being troubled by poverty and need, the promise of help against enemies and the promise of being the beloved of others. The ulama of Fiqh have said that it is fardh to recite durood at least once in a lifetime, while it is waajib to recite the same every time the name of Rasulullah ﷺ is mentioned. Some say it is mustahab.

The third person is that in whose presence one or both of his parents reach old age and yet he is unable to gain Jannah through failure to serve them. The ulama have stated that in every permissible act it is compulsory to obey their commands. One should not be disrespectful to them, but be humble even though they be non-believers. Neither should one raise his voice above theirs, nor address them by their names. When they have to be called to the good and prohibited from evil, it should be done with softness, even if they refuse to accept. At all times they should be honoured and respected. In a *Hadith* it is related: "The best of doors entering Jannah is the father. If you wish, look after it and if you wish destroy it." A sahaabi inquired from Rasulullah ﷺ: "What are the rights due to parents?" He replied: "They are your Jannah and your Jahannam." Further it is stated in the *Hadith* that: "When an obedient son looks with love and devotion to his parents, the reward for that gaze shall be the same as for a maqbool (accepted) Haj." In another *Hadith* it is stated that: "Apart from associating other gods with Allah, Allah forgives all sins as he pleases. However, He inflicts the tribulations of disobedience to parents in this world before death." A sahaabi said: "O Messenger of Allah, I want to go for jihaad." Rasulullah ﷺ asked: "Is your mother alive?" He replied: "Yes" Rasulullah ﷺ then said: "Serve her, Jannah lies under her feet for you." "The pleasure of Allah lies in pleasing one's father, and Allah's displeasure lies in displeasing one's father." From the above it should not be deducted that where parents had not been properly treated and respected and are now dead, there is no other way out except Jahannam for the children. In Shari'ah there is a way out. The *Hudith* teaches us that in such cases one should make much duaa and Istighfaar for them, and by doing that, one will be counted among those who are obedient. Another *Hadith* states that the best one can do after one's father's death is to treat his friends and companions in a friendly manner, as the father would have done.

٤. عن عبادة بن الصامت - رضي الله عنه - أن رسول الله ﷺ قال يوماً حضرنا رمضان: أتاكم رمضان. شهر بركة يغشاكم الله فيه فينزل الرحمة ويحط الخطايا. ويستجيب فيه الدعاء، ينظر الله تعالى إلى تنافسكم فيه ويباهي بكم ملائكته. فأروا الله من أنفسكم خيراً. فإن الشقي من حرم فيه رحمة الله عز وجل - رواه الطبراني، ورواته ثقات إلا أن محمد بن قيس لا يحضرني فيه جرح ولا تعديل. كذا في «الترغيب»

HADITH NO. 4

Ubaadah bin Saamit رضي الله عنه reports that Rasulullah ﷺ one day said when *Ramadhan* had drawn near: "The month of *Ramadhan*, the month of blessings has come to you, wherein Allah turns towards you and sends down to you His special Mercy, forgives faults, accepts prayers, looks at your competition for the greatest good and boasts to the *Malaa'ikah* over you. So show unto Allah righteousness from yourselves. For verily the most pitiable and unfortunate one is he who is deprived of Allah's Mercy in this month."

COMMENTARY

In this *Hadith* we read about the spirit of competition among the believers, one trying to do more good deeds than the other. In our own home, I am greatly pleased on seeing how the women folk vie with each other, the one trying to recite more of the *Qur'aan* than the others, so that in spite of domestic responsibilities fifteen to twenty juz of the *Qur'aan* is read by one daily. I mention this only out of a sense of gratitude to Allah, mentioning His favour and not to boast. May Allah accept their and our deeds and increase us all in good deeds.

٥. عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: إن لله تبارك وتعالى عتقاء في كل يوم وليلة. يعني في رمضان. وإن لكل مسلم في كل يوم وليلة دعوة مستجابة - رواه البزار. كذا في «الترغيب»

HADITH NO. 5

Abu Saeed Khudari رضي الله عنه relates that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Everyday and night of *Ramadhan* Allah sets free a great number of souls from Jahannam. And for every Muslim during everyday and night there is a time when his duaa is certainly accepted."

COMMENTARY

Apart from this *Hadith* there are many others stating that the duaa of a fasting person is mustajaab (accepted). In one *Hadith* we read that the duaa is accepted at the time of iftaar. The famous duaa at iftaar is:

اللهم لك صمت. وبك آمنت، وعليك توكلت، وعلى رزقك أفطرت

"O Allah for You have I fasted, in You do I believe, and on You do I rely and now I break this fast with food coming from You."

Abdullah bin Amr رضي الله عنه used to read the following duaa:

اللهم أني أسألك برحمتك التي وسعت كل شيء أن تغفر لي

"O Allah I beg You, through Your infinite Mercy which surrounds all things to forgive me."

In some books we read that Rasulullah ﷺ used to say:

يا واسع الفضل اغفر لي

"O You who are Great in Bounties, forgive me."

Remember that no special duaa is fixed. This time (at iftaar) is one when duaa is accepted. Submit before Allah all your needs and if you remember, then make duaa for me too.

٦. عن أبي هريرة قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: ثلاثة لا تُردُّ دعوتهم. الصائم حتى يفطر. والإمام العادل. ودعوة المظلوم. يرفعها الله فوق الغمام ويفتح لها أبواب السماء. ويقول الرب: وعزتي لأنصرنك ولو بعد حين - رواه أحمد في حديث. والترمذي وحسنه. وابن خزيمة وابن حبان في صحيحهما. كذا في «الترغيب»

HADITH NO. 6

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reports: Rasulullah ﷺ said: "There are three people whose duaas are not rejected; the fasting person until he breaks the *fast*; the just ruler and the dua of the oppressed whose dua Allah lifts above the clouds and opens unto it the doors of heavens, and Allah says: "I swear by My honour, verily I shall assist you even though it may be after some time."

COMMENTARY

In Durre Manthur it is reported from Aa'isha radhiyal'lahu anha that when *Ramadhan* appeared, the colour of Rasulullah's (ﷺ) face used to change. He then used to increase salaah, became even more humble in his duaas and had even more fear for Allah. According to another report he hardly ever lay down in bed until *Ramadhan* came to an end. Further, it is stated that the Mala'ikah carrying the Throne are commanded in *Ramadhan* to leave everything else and recite "Aameen" to the duaas of those who *fast*. Numerous are such Ahaadith stating that the fasting one's duaas are answered. When Allah has promised and His truthful Nabi ﷺ has informed us, there should be no doubt whatsoever about the truth of these reports. Yet strange it is, that in spite of this, we still find such people who apparently do not get what they make dua for. They ask and do not receive. This does not mean that their duaas have been rejected. One should at this point understand the meaning of a dua being answered.

Rasulullah ﷺ informed us that when a Muslim makes dua for anything from Allah, without having cut himself off from his near of kin and on condition that he does not make dua for any sinful thing, he definitely receives one out of the following three things: He gets the exact thing for which he made dua. Secondly, if that is not received, Allah either removes from his path some great calamity in exchange for that which he desired, or the reward for that thing for which he made dua is stored for him in the Hereafter. Another *Hudith* states that on the day of Qiyaamah Allah will call his servant, and say to him: "O my servant, I used to

command you to ask of Me and promised to answer. Did you beg of Me?" The servant will answer: "Yes I did." Then Allah shall reply: "You did not put forth any request which had not been accepted. You made duaa that a certain calamity should be removed, which I did for you in the worldly life. You made duaa that a certain sorrow should be cast off you and the effect of that sorrow was not even known to you. For that I have fixed for you such and such a reward." Rasulallah ﷺ says that, that man shall again be reminded of each and every duaa, and he shall be shown how it had been fulfilled in the world or what reward had been stored for him in the Hereafter. When seeing that, he shall wish that not a single duaa of his should have been answered on earth, so that he could receive the full rewards only in the Hereafter.

Yes, duaa is indeed very important and to neglect it at any time causes us great loss. And even when the outward signs seem to indicate that our duaa is not answered, courage should not be lost. Note that Allah in answering duaas considers first of all our own good and welfare. Should Allah find that granting that which we beseech from Him is in our welfare and interest, He grants it. Otherwise not. Actually it is Allah's favour on us that we do not always get what we ask for, for very often, because of our lack of understanding, we beg for such things which are not beneficial at a particular time.

Once again I must draw your attention to the fact that men as well as women, suffer from a disease of cursing their children in their anger and sorrows. Be very careful. In the sight of Allah there are certain times when whatever duaa is made it is immediately answered. So here due to our stupidity, the child is cursed and when the effect of that same duaa comes over the child and lands him into a calamity, the parents go crying and wailing from side to side. Rasulallah ﷺ commanded us not to curse ourselves, our children, possessions, or servants. It is just possible that that may be the curse that is heard at a time when all requests are granted, especially in *Ramadhan*, which is filled with such special mustajaab (accepted) moments. Hence in this month great care should be taken.

Ibn Mas'ood رضي الله عنه reports that on every night of *Ramadhan* a caller from the heavens calls out: "O you seeker of good, come near, O You seeker of evil, turn away (from evil) and open your eyes." Thereafter that angel calls out: "Is there any seeker of forgiveness that he may be forgiven? Is there anyone making duaa that his duaa may be heard?"

Lastly it should be borne in mind that there are certain conditions on which duaas are accepted. In the absence of these, duaas may be often rejected. Among these is halaal food. Where haraam is consumed duaa is not accepted. Rasulullah SAW. said: "Many a greatly troubled one in distr. . lifts up his hands to the heavens making duaa, crying: 'O Allah, O Allah.' However the food he eats is haraam, what he drinks is haraam, his clothes are of haraam and in such cases how can his duaa be accepted?"

A story is related about a group of people in Kufa whose duaa used to be always answered. Whenever a ruler was placed over them, they used to make a duaa for a curse upon him which quickly came to destroy him. When Hajjaaj became ruler there, he invited these people, amongst others, to a feast. After having eaten, he said: "Now I am not afraid of the duaas for a curse upon me for these people because haraam food has entered their stomachs." (At this stage let us ponder over how much haraam is being consumed in these times when people are even trying to make permissible the earning of interest money. We find our people go so far as to think that bribery and what is obtained from it is permissible, while our traders very often when trading with people deceive them.)

٧. عن ابن عمر قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: إن الله وملائكته يصلون على المتسحرين - رواه الطبراني في الأوسط، وابن حبان صحيحه. كذا في «الترغيب».

HADITH NO. 7




Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه relates Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Verily Allah and His Malaa'ikah send Mercy upon those who eat sehri (sower—suhoor)."


COMMENTARY

How great is Allah's favour upon us that even the partaking of food in the morning before dawn is so grandly rewarded. There are so many Ahaadith in which the virtues of sehri are expounded and rewards mentioned. Allaama Ainy — Commentator on Bukhari — gathered so many of these that seventeen pages of his book were filled. All ulama are agreed on its being mustahab. Many deprived of this great reward because of laziness. Some even finish Taraweeh, eat (what is supposed to be sehri) and get into bed. What great blessings do they lose!! Sehri actually means partaking of food shortly before Fajr. Some authorities say that the time for sehri commences after half of the night has passed. (Mirquat). The author of Kash-shaaf (Zamakhshari) divided the night into six portions stating that the last one of them is the time of sehri. So that when the night (from sunset till dawn) extends over twelve hours, the last two hours would be the correct time for sehri. Then it must also be remembered that to eat at the latest possible time is better and greater in reward than eating earlier, on condition that no doubt remains as to whether sehri, had been eaten before or after the time of Fajr. The Ahaadith are full of the virtues of sehri. Rasulullah ﷺ said: "The difference between our fasting and that of the Ahul-Kitaab (Jews and Christians) lies in partaking of food at sehri time. They do not."

"Eat sehri because in it lies great blessings." In three things there are great blessings: In jama'ah (company), in eating thareed and in sehri." In this *Hudith* the use of the word jamaa'ah is general, whereupon we deduce, salaah with jamaa'ah and all those righteous deeds done together. Allah's help comes to them (Thareed is a delicious type of food, in which dry baked bread is mixed with gravy containing meat). The third thing mentioned in the *Hudith* is sehri. When Rasulullah ﷺ used to invite any of the companions

to eat sehri with him, he used to say: "Come and partake of blessed food with me." One *Hadith* says: "Eat sehri and strengthen your *fast*. And sleep in the afternoon (siesta) so as to gain assistance in waking up in the latter portion of the night (for *ibaadah*)."

Abdullah bin Haarith  reports that one of the sahaaba said: "I once visited Rasulullah  at such a time while he was busy partaking of sehri. Rasulullah  then said: "This is a thing full of blessings which Allah had granted you. Never leave it."

Rasulullah  in urging towards sehri said: "Even though there be no food, then too one date should be eaten or a drink of water taken." Thus, when there definitely lies great blessings and reward in sehri, Muslims should endeavour to gain as much as possible. However, in all things moderation is important, while going beyond the bounds of moderation is harmful. Neither should so little be eaten so that one feels weak throughout the period of fasting, nor should so much be eaten that discomfort is felt in the digestive organs. Many a time we have been prohibited from filling the stomach excessively.

In his commentary on Sahih Bukhari, Ibn Hajar mentioned various reasons for the blessedness of sehri:

- a. Because in it the sunnah is followed.
- b. Through sehri we oppose the ways of the Ahlul-Kitaab, which we are at all times called upon to do.
- c. Provides strength for *ibaadah*.
- d. Promotes more sincerity in *ibaadah*.
- e. Aids in elimination of bad temper which normally comes about as a result of fasting.
- f. Sehri is a time when duaas are accepted.
- g. At the time of sehri one gets the opportunity to remember Allah, make zikr and lift up the hands to Him in dua.

These are a few of the major reasons. There are others as well.

Some Sufis are in doubt as whether the eating of sehri is against the object of fasting or not. They maintain that the object of fasting is to stay away from food, drink and sexual desires, therefore sehri is against the object of fasting. In my opinion the amount to be eaten varies according to the different persons and their activities. For example, as for those students who are busy seeking knowledge of Deen, little food at sehri as well as iftaar, will be harmful. For them it is better not to have very little, because they seek Deeni knowledge which is very important (for the preservation and spread of Islam). Similar is the case of those who are busy with zikr and other Deeni activities. Other people who have no hard work to do should eat little.

Once Rasulullah ﷺ announced to those proceeding to jihaad: "There is no virtue in fasting while travelling." That was in the month of *Ramadhan* when some sahaaba were busy with fardh fasting. Allaama Sha'raani mentions in *Sharh Iqna*: "A covenant was made with us that we shall not fill our stomachs completely when eating especially in the nights of *Ramadhan*." It is better that one should eat less in the nights of *Ramadhan* than on other nights. After all, what is the use of fasting after having filled oneself at sehri and iftaar? The Shaikhs of Tariqat have said: "Whoever remains hungry in *Ramadhan*, shall remain safe from the evil of shaytaan throughout the year until the next *Ramadhan*."

Imaam Ghazaali in his *Ihya Ulumid Deen* mentions the experiences of some Shaikhs. He makes mention of Sahl bin Abdullah Tastari who used to eat only once every fifteen days, while in *Ramadhan* he ate only one morsel. In order to follow the sunnah he used to have a drink of water daily for sehri and iftaar. Shaikh Junaid was a man who always used to *fast* throughout the year. However, when his noble friends used to visit him occasionally, he used to break his *fast* and eat with them saying: "The virtue of breaking *fast* and eating with (such noble) friends is not less than fasting (nafl).

Similarly we can mention the experiences of numerous saints who through little food used to train their inner selves, but once again, bear in mind, that it should not be carried out to such an extent that the religious activities and responsibilities are neglected as a result of weakness in the body.

٨. عن أبي هريرة - رضي الله عنه - قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: **زُبَّ صَائِمٍ لَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ صِيَامِهِ إِلَّا الْجُوعُ. وَزُبَّ قَائِمٍ لَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ قِيَامِهِ إِلَّا السَّهَرُ** - رواه ابن ماجه واللفظ له. والنسائي وابن خزيمة في صحيحه. والحاكم وقال: على شرط البخاري. ذكر لفظهما المنذري في «الترغيب» بمعناه.

HADITH NO. 8

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه relates that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Many are the ones who *fast*, attaining nothing by such fasting except hunger, and many are the ones performing salaah by night attaining nothing by it, except the discomfort of staying awake at night."

COMMENTARY

With regard to this *Hadith*, the ulama have mentioned three different interpretations: Firstly this *Hadith* may refer to those who *fast* during the day and then eat *iftaar* with such food which is *haraam*. All the reward received as a result of fasting is destroyed because of the great sin of eating *haraam*. Secondly, our Nabi ﷺ may have meant those who fasted properly but during fasting, kept themselves busy with backbiting and slandering others (see later). Thirdly, the person referred to may be him, who while fasting, did not stay away from evil and sin. Here all forms of sins are included. Likewise is the case of him performing salaah all night voluntarily. He may have stood in salaah all night but because of backbiting or any other sinful act (e.g. allowing Fajr salaah to pass by) his noble act becomes unrewarded.

٩. عن أبي عبيدة قال: سمعت رسول الله ﷺ يقول: الصيام جنة ما لم يخرقها - رواه النسائي وابن ماجه وابن خزيمة والحاكم وصححه على شرط البخاري، وألفاظهم مختلفة حكاهما المنذري في الترغيب .

HADITH NO. 9

Abu Ubaidah رضى الله عنه reports: "I have heard Rasulullah ﷺ saying: "Fasting is a protective covering for a man, as long as he does not tear that protection."

COMMENTARY

("Protective covering" here means such a covering whereby a man protects himself from his famous enemy—shaytaan. This is what fasting does.) In another *Hadith* we are told that fasting "saves one from punishment in the Hereafter." Once somebody inquired from Rasulullah ﷺ "What causes the *fast* to break?" He replied: "Telling lies and backbiting."

This *Hadith* when read in conjunction with so many others, actually tells us to avoid such deeds. Such deeds cause fasting to be wasted. In our times we are fond of keeping ourselves busy with unnecessary conversations. Some ulama are of the opinion that lies, backbiting, slander etc. actually do cause the *fast* to be broken just like eating and drinking. However the vast majority of ulama believe that the *fast* does not actually break but becomes null and void as far as blessings are concerned.

The ulama of Islam have mentioned six things about which care should be taken in fasting:

Firstly, one should keep the eyes away from any place where one should not look. They even go so far as to prohibit looking at one's own wife with desire. So how much more important is it to avoid looking at another woman with desire. Similarly looking at any evil

place or where evil is committed should be avoided. Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Whosoever out of fear for Allah, prevents himself from looking at evil, Allah shall grant him such faith, the sweetness and ecstasy of which he will feel in the heart." The Sufis interpreted the above saying that those looks which should be avoided include such places and things which distract the mind from the remembrance of Allah.

Secondly, guarding the tongue against lies, unnecessary conversation backbiting, arguments, swearing etc. In Bukhari we read that fasting is a deterrent for the fasting person. For this reason those who *fast* should avoid all nonsensical talk, joking, argument etc. Should anyone pick an argument, then say: "I am fasting." In other words, one should not start an argument and when someone else starts it then too one should avoid it. When the person who starts an argument is not an understanding person, then one should remind one's self that: "I am fasting." During the time of our Nabi ﷺ two women were fasting and suffered hunger to such an extent that the *fast* became unbearable and both were on the point of death. The sahaaba brought this to the notice of our Nabi ﷺ who sent a bowl commanding them to vomit in it. When they both vomitted in the bowl pieces of meat and fresh blood were found in it. The sahaaba were greatly surprised, upon which our Nabi ﷺ said: "They fasted and avoided eating halaal food from Allah, but partook of haraam food by backbiting other people."

From the above something else becomes clear that by backbiting during the *fast*, fasting becomes so much more difficult. For this reason both women almost died. Similar is the case with other sinful acts. Experience shows that on the faithful Godfearing ones, fasting has no adverse effect. One should stay away from sin and especially from major sins like backbiting and slander. Allah says in the *Qur'aan* that backbiting is the (actual) eating of the flesh of one's brother. We find this also in the *Hadith*. May Allah keep us safe from this evil because we are very neglectful of this. All are guilty of this. Even in the assemblies of the religiously educated and those who are considered religious, backbiting is rife. The worst of all is the fact that we do not even understand what backbiting is.

One of the sahaaba inquired from Rasulullah ﷺ "What is backbiting?" Rasulullah ﷺ replied: "To mention something about your brother behind his back which he resents." The sahaabi then said: "And is it still backbiting if that thing mentioned about him really is in him?" Our Nabi ﷺ said: "In that case (if that which was mentioned is really true) it is definitely backbiting. And if he is not guilty of it then you have slandered him." Once our Nabi ﷺ passed two graves. He said: "On both these inmates of the graves the punishment of the grave has descended. One is being punished because of backbiting, the other because of not having taken precautions when passing urine." Rasulullah ﷺ also said: "There are more than seventy ranks of evil in (using) interest. The lightest form of it is like having committed incest with your mother. And taking one Dirham of interest is worse in evil than having fornicated thirty-five times. The worst and most evil form of taking interest is the slandering of a Muslim. In the *Hadith* we are greatly warned against backbiting and slander. I very much wanted to write down here a number of Ahaadith on this topic because all our gatherings and conversations are generally filled with them (backbiting and slander). However I finally decided not to do so because the topic under discussion here is something else—not actually backbiting. So having just noted down these few, I once again make duaa that Allah keep us safe from this evil. And I beg of my friends and brothers to pray for me too. We are full of inner faults.

"What sickness is there O Allah that is not in me,
 Heal me from every illness and grant me my necessity,
 Verily I have a heart that is sick,
 Verily You are Healer of the sick."

Thirdly, according to the Sufis, what should be avoided is that the ears should be kept away from listening to anything makrooh. It is haraam to listen to anything which should not be said. Rasulullah ﷺ said that in "backbiting both the backbiter and the one who listens to it are equal in sin."

Fourthly, the rest of the body should be kept away from sin and evil. Neither should hands touch it, nor the feet made to walk towards it. With the stomach special care should be taken,

especially at the time of iftaar, that no such thing enter it, about which there is any doubt as to its being haraam or halaal. When a person fasts, and at iftaar time breaks *fast* with haraam food, he becomes just like a sick person who takes medicine to cure himself of the sickness but also adds poison which destroys him.

Fifthly, after having fasted it is not advisable to fill the stomach completely even with halaal food at iftaar, because then, the object of fasting is defeated. Whereas fasting seeks to diminish one's carnal desires, much food increases lust and decreases faith. For eleven months we have been eating and drinking. In *Ramadhan* this should be cut to a minimum. We have a bad habit of filling our bellies at iftaar for what was lost, and at sehri in preparation for the day, thus increasing our average consumption. Many such things are eaten which we normally do not eat at other times. This type of eating habit is completely against the spirit of *Ramadhan* and the true spirit of fasting.

Imaam Ghazaali asks the same question: "When the object of fasting is to conquer our carnal passions, then how can this possibly be done by eating excessively at iftaar and thus defeating the object?" Actually in that case we have only altered the times of eating and not really fasted. In fact more than that, by having so many various types of delicacies we consume even more than in normal times. The result is that instead of lessening the carnal desires, these are considerably increased. The real benefit of fasting comes as a result of actual hunger in the true spirit. Our Nabi ﷺ said: "Shaytaan flows through the body of man like blood; so close up the path by remaining hungry."

Apart from hunger, fasting gives us the chance of appreciating the poor and destitute and thus engender sympathetic feelings towards them. This too is attained by remaining hungry and not by filling the stomach with delicious foods at sehri so that one does not feel hungry until iftaar. Once a person went to Bishr Haafi. He found the saint shivering of cold in spite of having warm clothes at his side. That person inquired: "Is this a time for taking off clothes?" Bishr replied: "There are numerous poor and needy ones, I am unable to sympathise with them. The most I could do is to be like them." The Sufis plead for the same attitude in fasting and so do

the Fuqahaa (Jurists). In Maraqui Falaah it is written: "Do not eat excessively at sehri as this is a cause to loose the object of fasting." Allaama Tahtaawi writes: "When hunger is really felt, the reward for fasting becomes definitely more. Similarly feeling is developed for the poor and hungry ones." Our Nabi ﷺ himself said: "Allah does not dislike the filling of anything to the brim more than He dislikes the filling of the stomach." The best for a man is that one third should be filled with food, one third with drink while the other third remains empty. Rasulullah ﷺ himself used to *fast* for a few days on end without eating in between. I had seen my ustaaz Maulana Khalil Ahmad eating only slightly more than one thin (hand-made) bread (roti) at iftaar and sehri during the whole month of *Ramadhan*. When any of his near ones used to urge him to eat more, he used to reply: "I am not hungry. Actually I merely sat down to eat because of my friends."

About Maulana Shah Abdurraheem Raipuri, I have heard that in *Ramadhan* for days on end he used to *fast* while drinking at iftaar and sehri only a few cups of tea without milk—apart from that nothing else. Once his most trusted follower (and Khalifa) Maulana Shah Abdulqaadir remarked with anxiety: "Hazrat, you will become quite weak, if you do not eat anything." To this Maulana Shah Raipuri replied: "Praise be to Allah, I am experiencing something of the ecstasy of Jannah." (May Allah grant us all the ability to follow those pious ones. Aameen.)



The sixth point is that after fasting one should always have fear and anxiety as to whether one's *fast* had been accepted by Allah or not. This should be the case with all *ibaadah*. One never knows whether some such important thing may have been left out about which no notice was taken. One should fear that Allah may reject one's deeds. Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Many are the reciters of the *Qur'aan* who are being cursed by the *Qur'aan*." He also said: "On the day of Qiyaamah, one of those with whom Allah shall reckon first shall be a shaheed (martyr in the way of Allah). Allah shall call him and remind him of all His favours on him, which he shall admit. He shall be asked: "What have you done by way of expressing gratitude for those favours?" The shaheed shall reply: "I fought in Your way till I became a shaheed." Allah shall reply:

"Not true. You fought so that you can be called a brave man. And so it was said." Thereafter it shall be commanded that he be pulled with his face on the ground and cast into Jahannam. Thereafter an aalim shall be called. He too shall be reminded of Allah's favours and asked the same question. He shall reply: "O Lord, I sought to acquire knowledge, taught others and for Your sake recited the *Qur'aan*." Allah shall say: "Not true. You did all that merely so that it may be said that you are learned and so it was said." Then it shall be commanded that he too be pulled face on the ground and cast into Jahannam. Thereafter a rich man shall be called. He too shall be reminded of Allah's favours. He too shall admit them, and in reply to Allah's question as to what he did to express his gratitude, he shall reply: "I did not find any worthy cause wherein I did not spend out charitably for Your sake." Allah's reply shall come: "Not true. You did all that so that it may be said that you are very generous. And so it was said." Then it shall be commanded that he too be pulled face on the ground and cast into Jahannam." These six things are compulsory for all righteous ones. As for the exceptionally pious ones a seventh point is added. That is, during fasting, the heart should not be turned to anyone else except Allah, so much so that during the course of the *fast* there should be no worry as to whether there shall be something eatable at hand for iftaar. Some Shaikhs even consider it a fault to think about food for iftaar or that one should endeavour to acquire something. At all times one should have complete faith in Allah's promise of being responsible for the granting of rizq. In the commentary of *Ihya Ulumid Deen* the author goes so far as to say that should something for iftaar arrive from somewhere before the time of iftaar, it should be given to somebody else, for fear that for the rest of that day the heart may be distracted from Allah by keeping it. This can of course only be carried out by the exceptionally pious ones. We cannot even imagine having such faith. Should we try to follow that we may destroy ourselves.


The *Qur'aan* commands: "*Fasting has been prescribed for you.*" The commentators of the *Qur'aan* say that from this verse it is deduced that fasting is made compulsory for every portion of the body. Thus, fasting of the ears means not listening to evil. Fasting of the eyes means not to look at any form of evil and sin. Similarly fasting of the self means to be free from all carnal desires. Fasting of the heart means casting from it the love for worldly things. Fasting of the mind means avoiding thought about anything other than Allah.

١٠. عن أبي هريرة - رضي الله عنه - قال: من أفطر يوماً من رمضان من غير رخصة ولا مرض لم يقضه صوم الدهر كله وإن صامه - رواه أحمد والترمذي وأبو داود وابن ماجه والدارمي ، والبخاري في ترجمة باب ، كذا في «المشكوة». قلت: وبسط الكلام على طريقه العيني في شرح البخاري .

HADITH NO. 10

Abu Harairah  reports that Rasulullah  said: "Whosoever eats on one day of *Ramadhan* without a valid excuse (acceptable in Shari'ah), shall never be able to repay that day even by fasting the rest of his life."

COMMENTARY

The view of some ulama is that when anybody had without any valid excuse failed to *fast* any day of *Ramadhan*, and dishonoured it by eating etc., he can never repay (qadhaa) the same. Even fasting for the rest of his life cannot compensate for one day. Ali  held the same view. However the vast majority of ulama maintain that where one never fasted one day of *Ramadhan*, then one *fast* will suffice as compensation. On the other hand, when a person had started to *fast* in *Ramadhan* and then broken it during the day without any valid excuse, according to the Shari'ah, he shall have to *fast* for two months on end without a break in

between. No matter what happens, still the true virtue and blessings will never be attained as in *Ramadhan*. This is the meaning of the above *Hadith* i.e. that where a day of *Ramadhan* had been lost without excuse no number of fasts by way of compensation will bring back the true blessings of a day in *Ramadhan*.

This all is for those who keep the qadhaa *fast*. How unfortunate and misguided are those who deny the *fast* and do not observe it at all? Fasting is one of the fundamental pillars of Islam. Rasulullah ﷺ has mentioned five principles of Islam. First and foremost is the oneness of Allah and thereafter the four famous pillars: Namaaz, *Fast*, Zakaat and Haj.

How many Muslims do we find who are counted amongst the Muslims, yet do not uphold even one of these five. In official papers and the census they will be recorded as Muslims, whereas in Allah's sight they cannot be counted as such. Ibn Abbas ؓ relates a *Hadith* stating: "Islam is based on three principles — a. Faith, b. Salaat, c. Fasting. Whoever fails to uphold any one of these is a disbeliever." As regards to the latter portion of this *Hadith*, the the ulama have said that they only become disbelievers when together with failing to uphold any principle, they also deny its necessity; or its being a principle. No matter what interpretation is given, the fact remains that Rasulullah ﷺ most vehemently spoke out against such people. Hence those who fail to keep up the faraa'id of the Deen should indeed fear Allah's wrath greatly.

Death will surely bring them face to face with Allah. There none can escape. Only obedience to His commands can save us. There are those who do not *fast*. So much worse is the case of those who not only refuse to *fast*, but speak such words whereby they scoff and jeer at the month of fasting in a sarcastic manner. This is something dangerous, bringing one to the brim of kufr. You may have heard them say: "Fasting is for those who have no food in their homes,—not for me." Or "What does Allah gain by having us suffer hunger?" Such words should never be uttered. It should be remembered that to scoff and jeer at or poke fun at any smallest part of our Deen becomes the cause of kufr (apostasy). Should any

person perform not a single salaah in his life, nor *fast* one single day or fail to perform any fardh obligations in Islam, he does not become a kaafir, when he does not deny their being necessary. Whatever fardh obligation has been performed, is rewarded and whatever fardh not performed, shall be punished. But to scoff and jeer at any smallest part of the Deen is kufr (apostasy), as a result of which all good actions become null and void. From this it can be seen how dangerous this affair is.

Anyone failing to *fast* in *Ramadhan* without any valid excuse becomes a faasiq. The Fuqaha (jurists) have gone so far as to state that anyone eating publicly in *Ramadhan* without excuse should be put to death. It is unfortunate that we have no Islamic government to enforce this law and thus put an end to such actions. Nothing however, stops us from expressing dislike, resentment and hatred against such evil actions. That is the least to which our Imaan should drive us.

Having come so far, I consider these ten Ahaadith sufficient in this first chapter for those who wish to follow sincerely. As for those who have no intention to mould their *Ramadhan* accordingly, no amount of writing will be useful. May Allah grant me and all Muslims the strength to do righteous deeds as we all have our faults. May Allah help all the Muslims towards the path of righteousness and guide them aright. Aameen.

CHAPTER TWO

LAYLATUL QADR.

Amongst the nights of *Ramadhan* there is one called '*Laylatul Qadr*' a night that is noted for its great blessings. The *Qur'aan Karim* describes it as being greater in blessedness and spiritual virtue than a thousand months, which in turn means that it is greater than eighty three years and four months.

Indeed the granting of this night to the faithful Muslim is a great favour. Fortunate indeed is that person who attains the full blessings of this night by spending it in the *ibaadah* of Allah, because he has then attained reward for the *ibaadah* of eighty three years four months and even more.

THE ORIGIN

Regarding this night, in a *Hadith* reported by Anas رضي الله عنه in *Durre Manthur* Rasulullah ﷺ is reported to have said: "*Laylatul Qadr* was granted to this *ummah* (of mine) and not to any other *ummah* before this." But as regards the reason for the granting of *Laylatul Qadr*, various reasons are mentioned. One reason according to some *Ahaadith* is given thus: Rasulullah ﷺ used to look at the longer lives of the peoples of yore and when pondering over the much shorter lives of his *ummah*, he became greatly saddened. If his *ummah* then wished to compete with the people before them in the doing of righteous deeds, it would mean that because of their shorter lives it would be impossible for them

to either emulate or surpass them. For this reason, Allah in His Infinite Mercy granted them this night of great blessing. This means that if any fortunate one of this ummah spends during his life time ten such nights in the worship of his Maker, he would have gained the reward for ibaadah of eight hundred and thirty three years and even more. Another report states that Rasulullah ﷺ once related to the sahaaba the story of a most righteous man from among the Bani Isra'il who used to spend one thousand months in jihaad. On hearing this, the sahaaba felt greatly disappointed that they could not attain the same reward, whereupon Allah granted them this Night of Power. Still another report states that it so happened that our Nabi ﷺ once mentioned the names of the four most pious people from among the Bani Isra'il, who each spent eighty years in Allah's sincere service, worshipping Him and not sinning in the least. They were Nabi Ayyub alayhis salaam, Zakariyya alayhis salaam, Ezkeel alayhis salaam, Yu'shaa alayhis salaam. The sahaaba heard this with envious hearts hoping to emulate their feats. Then Jibra'il alayhis salaam appeared and recited Surah Qadr, wherein the blessings of this night was revealed.

Apart from these reports, there are others too, explaining the origin of the Night of Power. But no matter which of them we accept, the most important fact that remains is that Allah has granted us this night. Now, as to which night it is, here again approximately fifty different times are mentioned. It is not easy for me to enumerate them all. But the most accepted versions, as well as further discussions on this night shall follow in the ensuing pages of this book. Because the *Qur'aan Majid* itself mentions the night, we shall commence with a short commentary on Surah Qadr. (The translations are from A. Yusuf Ali.)

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ﴾

"We have indeed revealed this (message) in the Night of Power."

Reference here is made to the fact that on this specific night, the *Qur'aan* was sent down from the Al Lowhul Mahfuz (The preserved

Tablet) to the heavens (above the earth). The mere fact that the *Qur'aan* was revealed on this night would have been sufficient reason to explain its greatness. But apart from this fact it is also noted for many other things. In the very next verse by way of drawing and increasing our interest in the matter under discussion, a question is asked:

﴿وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ﴾ .

"And what will explain to you what the Night of Power is?"

In other words, the question asked here is: Have you any knowledge as to the greatness and the great importance of this night? Have you any knowledge as to the great favours and bounties that are placed in it? The next verse proceeds to enumerate some of that greatness:

﴿لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ﴾ .

"The Night of Power is better than a thousand months."

The true meaning here is that the reward for spending this night in *ibaadah* is better and more than having spent one thousand months in *ibaadah*, it is in fact more but as to how much more rewarding it is, we are not told here.

﴿تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ﴾ .

"Therein come down the Angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission on every errand."

A fine explanation is given for this verse by Imaam Raazi. Commenting on this verse he explains that when man first appeared on earth, created by Allah as His vicegerent on earth, the *Malaa'ikah* looked on him with scorn. When Allah informed them of His intention of placing man on earth, they even ventured to ask: "Will You place in this earth one who shall commit evil therein and shed blood?"

Similarly, when his parents noted his original form as a mere drop of mani (sperm), they too looked upon it with scorn and resentment, so much so, that they considered it as something which polluted clothing and had to be washed away. But later, when Allah made that same despicable sperm into a fine form of man, they began to love and cherish him. So far have things now progressed that when on this Night of Power we see that same man worshipping Allah and adoring Him, those very same Malaa'ikah who had previously looked down on him with scorn, descend towards him, obviously repentant for the thoughts they had once harboured against him.

In this verse mention is made . . . "and the Spirit . . ." Reference is clearly to Jibra'il alayhis salaam. Commentators of the *Qur'aan* have given various versions of the meaning of this word. Let us look at some of them:

- a. The vast majority of commentators are agreed that Jibra'il alayhis salaam is meant here, and according to Imaam Raazi, this is the most correct meaning. Allah first makes mention of the Malaa'ikah and then because of Jibra'il alayhis salaam's status among them, special mention is made of him.
- b. Some commentators hold the view that 'Spirit' here means one such Angel of such extraordinary gigantic proportion that before him heavens and earth appear as almost nothing.
- c. Another group of commentators opine that 'Spirit' here means one such group of Malaa'ikah who never appear and only on this night they are seen by other Malaa'ikah.
- d. Some commentators again believe that 'Spirit' here designates one such creation of Allah, which though partakes of food and drink, still is neither man nor angel.
- e. There is also a view that 'Spirit' here refers to Eesa alayhis salaam who on this night comes down to view the righteous deeds of this ummah.
- f. The last view we wish to mention here is that 'Spirit' means Allah's special Mercy which comes in the wake of the angels descent. But as already stated, the first opinion is the most acceptable.

In this respect Imaam Bayhaqi reports a *Hadith* by Anas رضي الله عنه wherein Rasulullah ﷺ is reported to have said: "On Laylatul Qadr Jibra'il comes down with a group of angels and make dua for mercy for every one whom they find busy in ibaadah."

This same verse under discussion says: "... By Allah's permission on every errand ...". The author of Mazaahire Haq writes that at this time ages ago the Malaa'ikah were created; on this night long ago the creation of Aadam alayhis salaam was begun as the matter from which he was created had been collected; on this same night Jannah and Jahannam were created and a large number of Ahaadith bear witness to the fact that on this night duaas are answered. Similarly we read in the kitaab, Durre Manthar, that according to a *Hadith* it was on this night that Eesa alayhis salaam was lifted up bodily into the heavens and also it was on this night that the towbah (repentance) of Bani Isra'il was accepted.

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿١٥٠﴾

"Peace be until the break of dawn."

Yes, this night is the very embodiment of peace. Throughout its hours the Malaa'ikah recite salaam upon the faithful believers adoring their Lord. As one ascends another group descends with the same greetings. And so it carries on. It is a night of complete safety from evil right until the break of day.

And now having noted a few virtues of this night as explained in the Word of Allah, we now turn to the *Hadith* to read more about the same.

١. عن أبي هريرة - رضي الله عنه - قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: من قام ليلة القدر إيماناً واحتساباً غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه - كذا في «الترغيب» عن البخاري ومسلم.

HADITH NO. 1

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reports that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Whoever stands in prayer and ibaadah on the night of Power with sincere faith and with sincere hope of gaining reward, his previous sins are forgiven."

COMMENTARY

In the above *Hadith* 'standing' refers to salaah as well as any other form of ibaadah, as for example zikr, tilaawah etc. The phrase '... with sincere hope of gaining reward', according to Khattabi means that one should have complete faith in the promise that deeds shall be rewarded and thus stand before Allah in utmost humility and sincerity. Neither should one have an idea that this form of ibaadah is a burden, nor should there be any doubt as to whether reward shall be granted. After all it is a known fact that when one aims at a high goal and desires to have a great reward, while at the same time having complete certainty of receiving it, the burden of striving hard along an arduous path to attain that goal becomes easy. Similarly the burden of standing for long hours becomes easy. This is the reason why those who had become spiritually elevated in Allah's sight find it easy to remain in ibaadah almost at all times.

It will be noted that the *Hadith* speaks about previous sins being forgiven. The ulāma have said that this forgiveness as mentioned in the *Hadith* above and others, refers only to minor sins, as major sins can only be forgiven after sincere repentance, with the vow and promise never to return to such sins again in future.

The *Hadith* however says nothing about major or minor sins. It merely states that sins are forgiven. Hence, it may be asked when Rasulullah ﷺ meant 'minor' sins, why did he leave us under a wrong impression by merely speaking about 'sins'? My late father (May Allah bless him and grant light in his resting place) used to say that for two reasons the word 'minor' has been omitted here.

Firstly, he says, a true Muslim is one on whom no major sins should rest because whenever a major sin has been committed, he will never rest or find peace until he has sincerely repented to his Lord, begged for forgiveness and promised not to do the same in future.

Secondly, my late father used to say, when such great and blessed days and nights come along, when a true Muslim stands before his Lord in prayer and adoration, hoping to gain reward, it is a fact that he in his conscience should feel greatly grieved for his previous sins. This grief over sins and the resolution not to return to such deeds are the most important requirements of towbah. This means that on such days and nights repentance of major sins is automatic, (leaving only minor sins to be forgiven). It is best however that when a night like *Laylatul Qadr* comes along, one should first of all repent with a heart full of sincere longing for forgiveness so that Allah in His Infinite Mercy may forgive all forms of sins. And when you do, remember me too in your duaas.

٢. عن أنس - رضي الله عنه - قال: دخل رمضان، فقام رسول الله ﷺ: إن هذا الشهر قد حضركم، وفيه ليلة خير من ألف شهر، من حرمها فقد حرم الخير كله، ولا يحرم خيرها إلا محروم - رواه ابن ماجه، وإسناده حسن إنشاء الله، كذا في «الترغيب» وفي «المشكوة» عنه: «إلا كل محروم».

Anas رضي الله عنه reports: "Once when *Ramadhan* commenced, the Messenger of Allah said: 'A month has verily dawned over you wherein lies a night better than one thousand months. Whoever is deprived of its blessings has indeed been deprived of (almost) all good. And none is deprived of its good except him who is completely unfortunate.'"

COMMENTARY

Who can have any doubt as to the misfortune of him who is either deprived or deprives himself of the great good of *Laylatul Qadr*? Who can doubt the misfortune of him who misses all the bestowed favours? Indeed there are so many of us. There are those who during the course of their services and duties of employment have to stay awake throughout the year by night. How difficult can it be for people like these should they, for the sake of gaining the reward of over eighty years *ibaadah*, stay awake for one month in the way of Allah's service? For them the task should not be too difficult, but, because of lack of interest, there is no urge in the heart. If that was present, then not one night, but a thousand nights in worshipping Allah would become exceedingly easy.

It is that urge and desire that we must create. Look at our Holy Prophet ﷺ; he had been promised time and again that he had nothing to fear in the Hereafter and had time and again been given good news as to his high position. Yet night after night he was seen in *ibaadah*, so much so that his feet became swollen. Among the sons of Islam there are so many of his saintly followers, who follow his example. They were human beings like us and none can thus say that it is impossible for us to have that same desire for *ibaadah*. Let us look at the example of the following illustrious sons of Islam. One such man was Umar رضي الله عنه who, having performed his *Eshaa salaah* used to return home then remain in *salaah* throughout the night until the *azaan* was heard for *Fajr*. Then there is the example of the pious Khalifa Uthman رضي الله عنه who, after fasting the whole day (almost throughout the year) used to spend the whole night in *salaah*, apart from having little sleep during part of the first third of the early night. It is well known about him that he used to recite the whole *Qur'aan* during one *rak'ah* at a time. In the *Ihya Ulumid Deen* by Imaam Ghazaali, Abu Taalib Makki mentions about forty men from among the *taabi'een*, who used to perform *Fajr salaah* with the same *wudhu* with which they had performed their *Eshaa salaah*.

Shaddad رضي الله عنه was one of the *sahaaba* who used to lie awake throughout the night turning from side to side until *Fajr*. Then he

used to say: 'O Allah the feat for the fire of Jahannam has driven away sleep from my eyes.' Aswad bin Yazeed RA. apart from sleeping a little between Maghrib and Eshaa, used to remain in ibaadah in *Ramadhan* throughout the night. Now let us look at a man like Saeed ibn Musayyib. It is said that for fifty years he used to perform Eshaa and Fajr with the same wudhu. Then there is the example of Sila bin Ashyam who after spending a whole night in Allah's worship, used to say at the break of day: 'O Allah I am not fit to beg of You Jannah but all I beseech from You now is that You save me from Jahannam.'

Qataada ؓ was a man who used to finish the recitation of the *Qur'aan* every three nights of *Ramadhan* but during the latter ten nights he used to complete the whole *Qur'aan* every night. About Imaam Abu Hanifa RA. it is well known that for forty years he performed Eshaa and the next morning's Fajr salaah with the same wudhu. When companions inquired of him as to where he had obtained the strength for that, he replied: 'It is in answer to a special duaa which I made to Allah in the name of the blessedness of His Special Names.' He merely slept a little in the afternoons about which he said: 'In the *Hadith* we are advised to do that.' (In other words, even in the afternoon sleep he used to follow the sunnah). This same Imaam Abu Hanifa while reciting the *Qur'aan* used to cry so much that his neighbours used to feel pity for him. Once he wept the whole night crying while reciting the following verse time and again:

"Nay the Hour (of Judgement) is the time promised for them (for their recompense) and that hour will be most grievous and bitter."

Ibrahim bin Ad'ham went so far as not to sleep in *Ramadhan* neither by night nor by day. Imaam Shafi'ee RA. used to recite the *Qur'aan* about sixty times during the days and nights of *Ramadhan*. And apart from these few there were countless other saintly souls who used to act diligently on the injunctions of the verse:

"I have only created jinn and human that they may serve Me."

These are examples of those who had gone before. But today too there are many who, with the same devotion, serve Allah and according to their own times turn night into day in the service of

Allah. Even in these times of evil and iniquity there are those who in their saintly manner follow the example of Rasulullah ﷺ

The Messenger of Allah said: "Allah says: 'O son of Aadam, spend your time in My service and I shall enrich you with independence and freedom from want, and I shall remove poverty from you. Otherwise I shall fill you with obligations and duties while your poverty and needs shall not disappear.' "

How true, daily we see the truth of this. People serve only Allah, while having no means of earning and yet they need nothing. On the other hand we see people striving hard to earn worldly things and necessities. They become so engaged in their task that no time is left for ibaadah. Then too, in spite of spending all their time seeking material needs, they remain full of worldly desires, necessities and obligations.

٣. عن أنس - رضي الله عنه - قال : قال رسول الله ﷺ :
إذا كان ليلة القدر نزل جبرئيل في كبكبة من الملائكة، يصلون
على كل عبد قائم أو قاعد يذكر الله عز وجل، فإذا كان يوم
عيدهم، يعني يوم فطرهم باهى بهم ملائكته، فقال : يا ملائكتي !
ما جزاء أجبر وفنى عمله ؟ قالوا : ربنا جزائه أن يوفى أجره، قال :
ملائكتي عبيدي وإمائي فضوا فريضتي عليهم، ثم خرجوا يعجوك
إلى الدعاء، وعزتي، وجلالي، وكرمي، وعلوّي، وإرتفاع مكاني
لأجيبنهم، فيقول : إرجعوا فقد غفرت لكم وبدلت سيئاتكم حسنات،
قال : فيرجعون مغفوراً لهم - رواه البيهقي في شعب الإيمان، كذا
في « المشكوة » .

HADITH NO. 3

Anas رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah said: 'On the Night of Power Jibra'il descends to the earth with a group of angels, reciting salaam and praying for the blessings on every servant of Allah they see standing in worship or sitting and celebrating Allah's praises. Then on the day of Eid; Allah boasts about them to the angels: "O My angels, what is the reward of that employee who had completed his service?" They reply: 'O our Lord, his reward should be given to him in full.' To this Allah replies: 'O My angels, verily My servants, the males among them as well as the females have performed the obligatory duty upon them, thereafter they set forth to the Eidgaah raising their voices in prayer to Me. I swear by My Honour, by My Greatness, by My Grace, by My High Position of Greatness, that I shall surely answer the prayer of those people.'" Thereafter Allah says (addressing the people): "Go forth, I have forgiven your sins and have replaced your evil deeds with righteous ones."

Those people then return from the Eidgaah in such a manner that their sins are forgiven."

COMMENTARY

In this *Hadith* it is clearly mentioned that Jibra'il AS. comes down with the angels. Another *Hadith* reported by Ibn Abbas and quoted by Abdul Qaadir Jilaani RA. in his book *Ghunya* further elucidates the contents of this *Hadith*. It is reported that Jibra'il AS., after his descent, commands the angels to proceed to the house of everyone busy with *ibaadah*, and to shake his hand. Thereupon the angels spread forth visiting every house whether large or small, whether in the jungle or on a ship wherein a believing worshipper resides to shake his hand. However certain houses are not entered. The house wherein a dog is found. The house wherein one is found in impurity (*janaabah*), as a result of adultery or fornication, and the house wherein pictures of men and animals are displayed. How unfortunate indeed, that some homes should be deprived of these blessings. How unfortunate that many Muslim's houses should not have the angels entering simply because there are pictures of men and animals being displayed, solely for the sake of adding what appears to be bit of adornment. Only one picture may have been hung by some member of the household as a result of which the complete dwelling is deprived of blessings.

HADITH NO. 3

Anas رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah said: 'On the Night of Power Jibra'il descends to the earth with a group of angels, reciting salaam and praying for the blessings on every servant of Allah they see standing in worship or sitting and celebrating Allah's praises. Then on the day of Eid; Allah boasts about them to the angels: "O My angels, what is the reward of that employee who had completed his service?" They reply: 'O our Lord, his reward should be given to him in full.' To this Allah replies: 'O My angels, verily My servants, the males among them as well as the females have performed the obligatory duty upon them, thereafter they set forth to the Eidgaah raising their voices in prayer to Me. I swear by My Honour, by My Greatness, by My Grace, by My High Position of Greatness, that I shall surely answer the prayer of those people.'" Thereafter Allah says (addressing the people): "Go forth, I have forgiven your sins and have replaced your evil deeds with righteous ones."

Those people then return from the Eidgaah in such a manner that their sins are forgiven."

COMMENTARY

In this *Hadith* it is clearly mentioned that Jibra'il AS. comes down with the angels. Another *Hadith* reported by Ibn Abbas and quoted by Abdul Qaadir Jilaani RA. in his book *Ghunya* further elucidates the contents of this *Hadith*. It is reported that Jibra'il AS., after his descent, commands the angels to proceed to the house of everyone busy with *ibaadah*, and to shake his hand. Thereupon the angels spread forth visiting every house whether large or small, whether in the jungle or on a ship wherein a believing worshipper resides to shake his hand. However certain houses are not entered. The house wherein a dog is found. The house wherein one is found in impurity (*janaabah*), as a result of adultery or fornication, and the house wherein pictures of men and animals are displayed. How unfortunate indeed, that some homes should be deprived of these blessings. How unfortunate that many Muslim's houses should not have the angels entering simply because there are pictures of men and animals being displayed, solely for the sake of adding what appears to be bit of adornment. Only one picture may have been hung by some member of the household as a result of which the complete dwelling is deprived of blessings.

٤. عن عائشة قالت : قال رسول الله ﷺ : تحروا ليلة القدر في الوتر من العشر الأواخر من رمضان - « مشكوة » عن بخاري -

HADITH NO. 4

Aa'isha radhiyal'lahu anha reports that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Seek *Laylatul Qadr* among the evenly numbered nights of the last ten days of the month of *Ramadhan*."

COMMENTARY

We come to the question: "When is *Laylatul Qadr*?" The above *Hadith* commands us to seek it among the last ten nights of *Ramadhan*. According to the vast majority of the authorities, that the last ten nights commence on the 21st night. Such is the case that whether the months of *Ramadhan* consists of 29 days or 30, one should seek *Laylatul Qadr* on the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th or 29th night.

Ibn Hazm has a different opinion, saying, that the word 'Ashra' as used in the *Hadith* means ten. As such the above calculation will only be correct in cases where the month of *Ramadhan* consists of thirty days. However, when there are only twenty nine days in the month (as often happens), the last ten days will commence with the 19th day and the night being the 20th night. According to this calculation it will mean that the unevenly numbered nights will be the 20th, 22nd, 24th, 26th, 28th and the 30th nights.

With due respect to a greatly learned aalim like Ibn Hazm, the majority of ulama do not agree with him, the reason being that *i'tikaaf* is sunnah during the last ten days of *Ramadhan*. When in search of *Laylatul Qadr* Rasulullah ﷺ went into *i'tikaaf*, he entered the masjid to commence his seclusion there on the 21st night of *Ramadhan*.

ADVICE

The best advice one can give here is that one should spend each and every night from the 20th onwards in *ibaadah*, so that one may be sure of having acquired the blessings of *Ramadhan*. Ten or eleven nights is definitely not so difficult if one looks at the great reward that is granted.

٥. عن عبادة بن صامت قال: خرج النبي ﷺ ليخبرنا بليلة
 القدر فتلاحى رجلان من المسلمين، فقال: خرجت لأخبركم بليلة
 القدر فتلاحى فلان وفلان فرفعت، وعسى أن يكون خيراً لكم ،
 فالتمسوها في التاسعة، والسابعة، والخامسة - «مشكوة» عن
 البخاري -

HADITH NO. 5

Ubaadah bin Saamit رضي الله عنه said: 'Once Rasulullah ﷺ came out to inform us of the (true date) of *Laylatul Qadr*. (Unfortunately at that time) an argument took place between two Muslims, whereupon he said: "I came out in order to inform you as to when *Laylatul Qadr* was, but because two people argued (the fixing of the correct date) was taken away. Perhaps that is better for you. So seek it among the ninth, seventh and fifth nights."

COMMENTARY

Three important points are referred to in this *Hadith*. Firstly, there is mention of such an argument as a result of which the knowledge of the actual night of *Laylatul Qadr* was lost to us. Arguments are always the cause of loss of blessings. Once Rasulullah ﷺ inquired of the companions: "Shall I inform you of some such action that is better than salaah, fasting and charity?" The companions replied: 'Certainly'. Rasulullah ﷺ then said: "Maintain peaceful and good relations amongst yourselves, for verily arguments among yourselves destroy faith."

This is indeed an illness among us. Even those among us who appear exceptionally religious and busy with zikr are victims of these arguments and strife. In the first chapter of this book we read how the Messenger of Allah said that to insult a Muslim is indeed a grave crime and among the worst of deeds. We often go to such an extent that when we cross words with Muslims in arguments, we do not even take care, of a Muslim's honour, or to refrain from insults. In such cases no notice seems to be taken of the injunctions of Allah and His Messenger. The Holy *Qur'aan* says: "*And argue not among yourselves, otherwise your courage will go and your strength depart.*"

It is now the duty of those who always seek to injure and destroy the honour and dignity of others to sit back and think how much harm they have done to themselves. They should think how much they have, through these despicable deeds, become despicable in Allah's sight and in the sight of those around them. Rasulullah ﷺ said that on every Monday and Thursday the actions of servants are brought before Allah. Then through His Mercy (as a result of certain deeds) forgiveness is granted, except to the idolators. However, regarding those two people, between whom an argument had taken place, friendship having been cut off, it shall be said: "Leave their affair aside until such time that they become reconciled."

Another *Hadith* states that when actions are produced before Allah every Monday and Thursday, repentance is accepted of those who

repent, and forgiveness is granted to those who seek pardon. As for those who had arguments, they are left as they are.

The *Hadith* further teaches us that on the night of the 14th of Sha'baan, the Mercy of Allah is directed at all Allah's creation and forgiveness is freely granted except for two persons: One, a kaafir (disbeliever), and the one who harbours bad thoughts against others. In another *Hadith* it is stated: "There are three people whose salaah do not ascend one hair's breadth above their heads." Mentioned among these are those who argue among themselves.

In the above few paragraphs I have digressed from the point under discussion. It was not my intention to mention all these Ahaadith on arguments. I merely did it to bring to our notice this great evil which we greatly under-estimate, so much so that even those whom we consider to be noble and righteous are guilty of it.

On the other hand, be informed that this fighting, use of harsh words and cutting oneself off from one another, is only a crime and evil in Islam, when done out of worldly enmity and hatred over worldly things and worldly causes. When we break off relations with someone because of his evil deeds or because of some religious matter (wherein he is in the wrong and blameable), it is permitted. Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه once quoted a saying of Rasulullah ﷺ to which his son said something, which outwardly appeared as if he objected to it. The result was that Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه never again spoke to that son as long as he lived.

Often we too cut off relations with people and claim that it is for the sake of Deen. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise and He alone knows the true state of affairs. He knows which relations are broken off because of Deen and which because of our honour, pride and dignity, which had become damaged.

The second point to which the *Hadith* under discussion draws attention is the fact that man should be satisfied and accept Allah's ruling in all matters. For example, even though it seems that the loss of the knowledge as to when *Laylatul Qadr* actually falls, is a great loss of blessing, it has to be accepted because it is from

Allah's side. It is because of this that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "It is better for us that way." One should ponder over this. Allah is at all times Merciful to His servants.

Even when someone becomes overtaken by a great calamity because of his own evil deeds, he needs only appeal to His Creator, admit his own weakness, and that same calamity becomes the cause for greater good.

Our ulama have mentioned quite a few advantages in not knowing the proper time for *Laylatul Qadr*. Firstly, had we known the actual time for this blessed night, there would have been so many who would not have served Allah at all during the year or on other nights. They would only wait for the prescribed night in which to perform their ibaadah. As things are now, one has to stay awake and be in (ibaadah) for quite a number of nights hoping that each night is perhaps the night. This means more nights in Allah's service and reward for the same.

Secondly, there are among us those who just do not seem to be able to avoid evil. How extremely dangerous and unfortunate for them would it be, when in spite of knowing that such-and-such a night is *Laylatul Qadr* and then still spend it in sin and evil? Once Rasulullah ﷺ, on entering the masjid, saw one of the sahaaba sleeping on one side. He said to Ali ؑ: "Wake him up so that he can make wudhu." This Ali ؑ did and then addressed the Prophet ﷺ thus: "O Messenger of Allah, you are always first to hurry towards any good deed. Why did you not wake him up yourself?" To this the Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "I fear on his behalf that this man may refuse and refusal to my command is kufr. If he refused your command it would not be kufr (disbelief)." Similarly Allah In His Mercy does not approve that in spite of knowing which night is the real one, one should still spend it in sin and evil.

Thirdly, there are amongst us nowadays some who find it impossible to spend one, two or three nights in ibaadah, while we do not know which is the Night of Power. Now say for arguments sake, we did not know and in spite of that, for one reason or

another, within or outside our control, we allowed that night to go by without *ibaadah*, it is an almost certain fact that thereafter, for the rest of *Ramadhan*, no other night would have been spent in *ibaadah*.

Fourthly, every night spent in *ibaadah* in search of *Laylatul Qadr* is a night for which separate reward is granted.

Fifthly, we have read that Allah boasts with His angels about those believers who exert themselves in *ibaadah* during *Ramadhan*. Now when they spend more nights in Allah's worship, more such chances of boasting arise.

In spite of not knowing when the real night of *Laylatul Qadr* is and although they have only a vague idea about its fixed time, still they exert themselves to the utmost in Allah's service night after night. Such then is their exertion when it is not known, so how much more will they exert themselves when it is known to them?

There are sure to be other advantages. It is common knowledge that Allah often keeps certain things secret to Himself, as for example, the 'Ismul Aa'zam' (the great Name of Allah, whereby, if we call upon Him, He answers). Similar is the case of that special moment on the day of Jumu'aa when prayers are answered. This time too is not known with complete certainty.

The third point to which attention is drawn is the fact that *Laylatul Qadr* should be sought among the 9th, 7th and 5th. By reading this in conjunction with the other Ahaadith, we come to know that this refers to the last ten nights of *Ramadhan*. So which nights are these? If we start from the 20th, counting up, then these three nights are the 25th, 27th and 29th. If, on the other hand, we start counting from the 29th down, where *Ramadhan* has 29 days, these nights are the 21st, 23rd and 25th.

From the above one can see how much difficulty there is about the correct date. Among the learned ulama there are approximately fifty different opinions. Because of this, some ulama have said that *Laylatul Qadr* does not fall on one and the same night every year.

in this year it fell on one night then the following year it fell on another night. There are times when the Holy Prophet ﷺ commanded the companions to search among a number of nights, whereas at other times again he used to fix a certain night.

Abu Huraira ؓ reports that once during a conversation with the companions, mention was made of *Laylatul Qadr*. Rasulullah ﷺ asked: "What is the date today?" They replied: "The 22nd of *Ramadhan*. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Search for *Laylatul Qadr* in the night following this day."

Abu Zarr ؓ reports that he inquired of the Holy Prophet ﷺ whether *Laylatul Qadr* was only granted for the time of the duration of Rasulullah's (ﷺ) life, or whether it continued to come after him. Rasulullah ﷺ replied: "It continues until *Qiyaamah*." I then inquired: "In which section of *Ramadhan* does it come?" The Prophet ﷺ replied: "Search for it in the first ten and in the last ten days." Thereafter the Holy Prophet ﷺ became busy with other work. I waited, and finding another chance inquired: "In which section of those ten does *Laylatul Qadr* come?" Upon this Rasulullah ﷺ became so angry with me as he had never been before, and said: "If it had been Allah's object to make it known, would He not have informed? Search for it among the last seven nights, and ask no more." In another *Hadith* again Rasulullah ﷺ is reported to have told one sahaabi that *Laylatul Qadr* was on the 23rd night.

Ibn Abbas ؓ related: "While sleeping once, someone said to me in my dream: 'Rise up. This is *Laylatul Qadr*.' I woke up and proceeded in haste to Rasulullah ﷺ. There I found him in *salaat*. That was the 23rd night." According to other reports again, the 24th is *Laylatul Qadr*. Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ said: "Whoever remains all the nights of the year in *ibaadah* can find *Laylatul Qadr*." (In other words the blessed night moves throughout the year and does not necessarily have to come in *Ramadhan* only.) When this was mentioned to Ubay bin Kaab ؓ he said: "Yes, people stay awake only on this night and become contented." Thereafter he swore by Allah that *Laylatul Qadr*

comes on the 27th. This is also the view held by numerous sahaaba as well as taabi'een. What Ibn Mas'ood ؓ and Ubay ؓ actually meant was that, that person who remains in *ibaadah* all the nights of the year will certainly feel when *Laylatul Qadr* is.

Among the Imaams, the well known opinion of Imaan Abu Hanifa RA. is that *Laylatul Qadr* moves throughout the year, while another view of his is that it moves about throughout the month of *Ramadhan*. His famous student-followers, Imaam Muhammad and Imaam Abu Yousuf, however, were of the opinion that the night is fixed on one specific night which is unknown, during the Holy month. While the Shaafi'ee's believe that it comes round about the 21st, Imaam Ahmed RA. and Imaam Maalik RA. hold the view that it comes only among the last ten nights of *Ramadhan*, alternating from year to year and is not fixed. But as for the vast majority of the ulama their most precious hope lies in *Laylatul Qadr* coming annually on the 27th.

Ibn Arabi says: "In my opinion the view of those who believe that *Laylatul Qadr* comes on various nights throughout the year, is most correct because twice have I seen it in Sha'baan—once on the 15th and once on the 19th; and twice have I seen it in the middle ten nights of *Ramadhan*—the 13th and the 18th. And I have seen it on every night of the last ten. For this reason I am certain that it alternates on all nights throughout the year but comes mostly in *Ramadhan*.

Shah Waliyullah of Delhi believed that *Laylatul Qadr* comes twice every year: (a) One *Laylatul Qadr* is that one on which Allah's commands are revealed (to the angels). This is also the night on which the Holy *Qur'aan* was sent down from the Al Lowhul Mahfuz to the heavens. This night does not come in *Ramadhan* alone but alternates and can come on every other night of the year. However the night on which the Holy *Qur'aan* was revealed fell in *Ramadhan*. (b) The second *Laylatul Qadr* is the one of tremendous spiritual value, when angels descend in large numbers, while shaytaans are held back and when prayers are answered. This comes only in *Ramadhan* during the 'uneven' nights of the last ten days. (This view of Shah Waliyullah used to be most acceptable to my father.)

Anyway, whether there are two *Laylatul Qadrs* or whether there is only one, the fact still remains that one has to search for it. If not throughout the year, then in *Ramadhan*. If that should prove difficult, then during the last ten days. When that too seems a bit too much to be expected, then only the odd numbered nights of the last ten days. When one had wasted these too, then by no means should the 27th be allowed to go by. Thus, even though that may not be the much-searched-for night, then at least the reward for *ibaadah* is received.

The *salaat* of *Maghrib* and *Eshaa* throughout the year should not be performed without *jamaa'ah*; because if it is, *Laylatul Qadr* the reward for both is so much more. It is a great blessing of Allah that when one endeavours for religious aims and cannot make a success, he is still rewarded for the effort. And inspite of this, how few courageous one's are there who do not leave a stone unturned in their services for Deen? On the contrary; in worldly affairs when one does not break even, his efforts are also written off as a loss. Then too in this latter case numerous people spend their time, efforts and wealth in worldly things that are fruitless and without purpose, and do not hold any reward or consolation.

٦. عن عبادة بن الصامت. أنه سأل رسول الله ﷺ عن ليلة القدر. فقال: في رمضان في العشرة الأواخر. فإنها في ليلة وترٍ في إحدى وعشرين أو خمس وعشرين أو سبع وعشرين أو تسع وعشرين أو آخر ليلة من رمضان. من قامها إيماناً واحتساباً غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه. ومن أماراتها أنها ليلة بلّحة. صافية ساكنة. ساجية لا حارة ولا باردة. كأن فيها قمراً ساطعاً. ولا يحل لنجم أن يرمى به تلك الليلة حتى الصباح. ومن أماراتها أن الشمس تطلع صبيحتها لا شعاع لها. مستوية كأنها القمر ليلة البدر. وحرم الله على الشيطان أن يخرج معها يوماً - در منشور عن أحمد والبيهقي ومحمد بن نصر وغيرهم

HADITH NO. 6

Ubaadah bin Saamit رضي الله عنه reports that he asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about *Laylatul Qadr*. He replied: "It is in *Ramadhan* during the last ten days, on the unevenly numbered nights, either the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th or the last night of *Ramadhan*. Whosoever stands in *ibaadah* on this night with sincere faith and with genuine hopes of gaining reward; his previous sins will be forgiven. Among the signs of this night is that it is a serene, quite shining night, not hot, nor cold (as if through the amount of spiritual light) the moon remains clear, without any rays; until the break of dawn. No stars are hit at the *shayaateen* on that night. Another sign is that at morn the sun rises without any radiant beams of light, appearing rather like the moon in it's fullness. On that day Allah prohibits the *shayaateen* from rising up with the sun."

COMMENTARY

Part of what has been mentioned in this *Hadith* has already been dealt with. Some signs are mentioned about the actual night. These signs are clear and need no further elucidation. Apart from these signs, however, there are other signs too, as found in the *Hadith* and in the experiences of those who had the fortune to experience *Laylatul Qadr*. The sign that is, however, most common in the *Hadith* is the rising of the sun 'without any radiant beams of light.' One *sahaabi*, Ab'da bin abi Lubaaba رضي الله عنه says: "On the evening of the 27th, I tasted the water of the sea and it was sweet." Ayyub bin Khalid said: "When I once had to wash my self with sea water, and on tasting it, found it sweet. This was on the 23rd night." Some of the *mashaa'ikh* wrote that on the evening of *Laylatul Qadr* everything prostrates to Allah so much so that trees fall flat on the ground then return to their positions. These are however things not seen by the ordinary person.

٧. عن عائشة - رضي الله عنها - قالت: قلت: يا رسول الله ! أرايت إن علمتُ أي ليلة ليلة القدر ما أقول فيها ؟ قال: قولِي: «اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُورٌ حَبِيبُ الْعَفْوِ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي - رواه أحمد وابن ماجه والترمذي وصححه. كذا في «المشكوة» .

HADITH NO. 7

Aa'isha radhiyal'lahu anha reports: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, when I find myself in *Laylatul Qadr*, what shall I say?' The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'Say: O Allah, Thou art the One who grants pardon for sins, Thou lovest to pardon, so pardon me.'"

COMMENTARY

This is indeed such an all inclusive prayer, wherein one begs that Allah in His Infinite Grace should forgive sins. If that has been attained, the path to the Hereafter is secure. Hence what else would one require? Imaam Sufyaan Thowry used to say that to keep oneself busy on this night with duaa is better than any other forms of ibaadah. Ibn Rajab says that one should not only remain busy with duaa, but should take part in all other forms of ibaadah as well, e.g. recitation of the Holy *Qur'aan*, salaah, duaa, etc. This latter opinion is most correct and more nearer to what Rasulullah ﷺ had said as already mentioned in previous Ahaadith.

CHAPTER THREE

I'TIKAAF (Seclusion in the masjid)

The meaning of *i'tikaaf* is to seclude oneself in the masjid with the express niyyah (intention) of *i'tikaaf*. According to the Hanafi school of thought this may be of three different types.

a. Waajib *i'tikaaf* (Obligatory *i'tikaaf*)

I'tikaaf becomes compulsory when a person makes it obligatory upon himself. An example of this is that when a person makes a vow to Allah that if Allah fulfills a certain wish of his, he shall perform so many days *i'tikaaf*. In this case the moment his wish is fulfilled, *i'tikaaf* becomes compulsory; or a person may just make an unconditional vow whereby he makes *i'tikaaf* waajib upon himself for a certain number of days. This becomes a duty on him from that moment onwards.

b. Sunnat *i'tikaaf*

This was the general practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It means to seclude oneself inside the masjid for the last ten days of *Ramadhan*.

c. Nafl *i'tikaaf*

For nafl *i'tikaaf* no special time and no specific number of days are fixed. A person may make a niyyah for any number of days at any time, even for his whole life. While Imaam Abu Hanifah RA. states that it must, however be for not less than a full day, Imaam Muhammad RA. states that there is no limit as to the minimum period of time. The fatwa is on this latter view. Therefore it is desirable for anyone entering a masjid to make the niyyah (intention) of *i'tikaaf* for the period that he will remain in the masjid. So while he is in *ibaadah* he also gains the reward of *i'tikaaf*.

الخصلتان اللتان ترضون به ربكم شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله وتستغفرونه. وأما الخصلتان اللتان لا غناء بكم عنهما فتستلوان الله الجنة وتعوذون به من النار، ومن أسقى صائماً سقاه الله من حوضي شربة لا يظماً حتى يدخل الجنة - رواه ابن خزيمة في صحيحه، وقال: أن صح الخبر، ورواه البيهقي ورواه أبو الشيخ بن حبان في «الثواب» باختصار عنهما، وفي أسانيدهم علي بن زيد بن جدعان، ورواه ابن خزيمة أيضاً، والبيهقي باختصار عنه من حديث أبي هريرة وفي إسناده كثير بن زيد، كذا في «الترغيب»: ٢٠٣، قلت: علي بن زيد ضعفه جماعة، وقال الترمذي: صدوق، وصح له حديثاً في السلام، وحسن له غير ما حديث وكذا كثير، ضعفه النسائي وغيره، وقال ابن معين: ثقة، وقال ابن عدي: لم أر بحديثه بأساً، وأخرج بحديثه ابن خزيمة في صحيحه، كذا في «رجال المنذري»: ٧٠٤، لكن قال العيني: الخبر منكر، فتأمل

HADITH NO. 1

Salmaan رضي الله عنه reports: "On the last day of Sha'baan the Messenger of Allah addressed us and said: 'O people, there comes over you now a great month, a most blessed month in which lies a night more greater in virtue than one thousand months. It is a month in which Allah has made compulsory that the days should be observed by fasting. And he has made sunnah the Taraweeh by night. Whosoever intends drawing nearer to Allah by performing any virtuous deed, for him shall be the reward like him who had performed a fardh in any other time. And whoever performs a fardh, for him shall be the reward of seventy fardh in any other

OBJECTS OF I'TIKAAF AND ADVANTAGES

In view of the above, it is advisable that everyone entering the masjid to join the congregational prayer, should on entering the masjid, make the niyyah for *i'tikaaf*. In that case, it means that as long as he remains busy with salaah, zikr, listening to lectures or sermons, he also receives reward for the *i'tikaaf*. I always observed that my late father, whenever he entered the masjid, he used to make niyyah for *i'tikaaf*. Occasionally, by way of teaching and reminding his followers, he used to raise his voice when reciting the niyyah.

The reward for *i'tikaaf* is great. The mere fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ always used to perform it is sufficient to explain the virtue that lies in it. The example of him that resides in the masjid in *i'tikaaf* is that of a person, who having gone to a certain place to appeal for something, and then remains there until it is granted, saying: "O Allah, I have placed my humble request before You, and have faith in Your generosity, and I shall not move from here until my request is granted by You."

When someone comes begging to our door and then refuses to leave until he has been granted his request, I am sure that even the one with the hardest heart amongst us will eventually give in to his request. How much more Merciful is Allah.

Allaama ibn Qayyim, on explaining the significance of *i'tikaaf*, writes that the actual aim behind *i'tikaaf* is to divert the heart away from everything except Allah, and to join it with Allah alone, thereby forming a complete spiritual connection with the Creator. All worldly connections are thus cut off for the sake of gaining Allah's attention. All thoughts, desires, love and devotion become centred around Him: In answer to that His love is attained — a love and friendship that will be the only friend in the loneliness of the grave. When a person has that, then who can possibly imagine the great ecstasy with which that time of the grave will be spent?

In Maraqlul Falaah, the author writes that *i'tikaaf*, when properly and sincerely performed, is a most virtuous deed. One cannot possibly enumerate all the great advantages and benefits in it. In actual fact, what takes place in *i'tikaaf*, is, that the heart is drawn away from everything else except the Creator, while our whole life is actually laid down at His doorstep. All the time one remains in *ibaadah*. Even when one is asleep, one is still in His service, striving for nearness to Him. And Allah says (according to a *Hadith*): "Whoever draws near to Me (the length of) one hand, then I draw nearer to him (the length of) two hands; and whoever draws near to Me by walking, I draw nearer to him by running."

WHERE TO PERFORM I'TIKAAF

The best of places for *i'tikaaf* is the Masjidul Haraam in Mecca. The next best is the Masjidun Nabawi in Medina, and the next best is Baitul Mukaddas. Thereafter, comes the Jaame Masjid in one's own town, and, last but not the least, the masjid nearest to one's home. Imaam Abu Hanifa RA. stipulates the masjid should be one wherein the five daily prayers are performed, while Imaam Abu Yousuf and Imaam Muhammad are agreed that any masjid according to the Shari'ah can be entered for *i'tikaaf*.

The above is as far as males are concerned. As for the females, they should perform *i'tikaaf* in the masjids inside their homes. Where, however, no masjid exists, and the desire for *i'tikaaf* be there, one section of the house should be set aside for this purpose. *I'tikaaf* is in fact an easier task for women. A special section of the house, most commonly the prayer room, is set aside wherein they seclude themselves, remaining in *ibaadah*. The domestic duties can then be performed by the daughters or servants, and the woman in *i'tikaaf*, while remaining in a section of her own house, is spiritually rewarded for it. (It is so very unfortunate that in spite of the ease, our women folk still remain deprived of the blessings of *i'tikaaf*. We here in South Africa are even more negligent of this sunnah, so much so, that many have not even heard of it — Translator).

١. عن أبي سعيد الخدري أن رسول الله ﷺ اعتكف العشر الأول من رمضان. ثم اعتكف العشر الأوسط في قبة تركية. ثم أطلع رأسه. فقال: إني اعتكف العشر الأول التمس هذه الليلة. ثم اعتكف العشر الأوسط. ثم أوتيت. فقيل لي: إنها في العشر الآخر. فمن كان اعتكف معي فليعتكف العشر الآخر. فقد أريت هذه الليلة ثم أنسيتها وقد رأيتني أسجد في ماء وطين من صبيحتها فالتمسوها في العشر الآخر. والتمسوا في كل وتر. قال: فطرت السماء تلك الليلة. وكان المسجد على عريش. فوكف المسجد. فبصرت عيناى رسول الله ﷺ وعلى جبهته أثر الماء والطين من صبيحة إحدى وعشرين - «مشكوة» عن المتفق عليه باختلاف اللفظ.

HADITH NO. 1

Abu Saeed Khudari رضي الله عنه reports that Rasulullah ﷺ once performed *i'tikaaf* in a tent (inside the masjid) for the first ten days of *Ramadhan*. Thereafter he made for the middle ten days. Thereafter he raised his head out of the tent and said: "Verily in search of *Laylatul Qadr* did I perform *i'tikaaf* for the first ten days. I had indeed been shown that night and then made to forget, which it shall be. And verily did I see myself prostrating to Allah with my forehead on mud on the morning after that night. Seek *Laylatul Qadr* among the last ten nights of *Ramadhan*: Seek it among the uneven ones." Abu Saeed رضي الله عنه says: "That same night it rained. The roof of the masjid leaked and I saw Rasulullah ﷺ performing sujud in muddy clay."

COMMENTARY

It used to be the general practice of Rasulullah ﷺ to perform *i'tikaaf* in *Ramadhan*. At times he used to remain in the masjid for the whole month and during the last year of his life he was in *i'tikaaf* for twenty days. Because he almost always secluded himself in the masjid for the last ten days, the ulama consider it sunan mu'akkadah to perform *i'tikaaf* for that period.

From the above *Hadith* it can be deduced that the major object behind *i'tikaaf* was to search for *Laylatul Qadr*. What better manner can there be than to remain in *ibaadah* all the time, whether one is awake or asleep. Furthermore, one in *i'tikaaf* is free from all daily tasks and thus has all the time to devote to *zikrullah*, (the remembrance of Allah) and meditation.

Throughout *Ramadhan* Rasulullah ﷺ remained in *ibaadah* and when the last ten days came along, he had no limit in exerting himself. He himself remained awake throughout the night and set the example by waking up his family for the same purpose. Aa'isha radhiyal'lahu anha reports: "During the latter ten days of *Ramadhan*, Rasulullah ﷺ tied his lungi tightly about him, staying awake all night and waking his family (for the purpose of *ibaadah*). "Tied his lungi tightly about him" means either that he knew no limits in exerting himself in *ibaadah*; or that he gave due importance and preference to *ibaadah*, and avoided all forms of sexual contact.

٢. عن ابن عباس - رضي الله عنه - أن رسول الله ﷺ قال في المعتكف: هو يعتكف الذنوب ويجزى له من الحسنات كعامل الحسنات كلها - «مشكوة» عن ابن ماجه .

HADITH NO. 2

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه relates that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "The person performing *i'tikaaf* remains free from sins, and he is indeed given the same reward as those who do righteous deeds (inspite of not having done those deeds as a result of having been secluded in the masjid").

COMMENTARY

(Note that one remaining secluded in the masjid is not allowed to depart from there for worldly needs. He may only set forth to the outside for the calls of nature, to perform ablution or ghusl or for attending Jumu'aa when that is not performed in the same masjid, after which he must return forthwith.) Now this *Hadith* points to two great benefits of *i'tikaaf*.

Firstly, one avoids sin. It is true that it very often happens that one falls into sin without ever intending to do so. The world all around us is full of temptations. To commit sin in the blessed month of *Ramadhan* is indeed a great injustice to ourselves. Through remaining secluded in the masjid, one completely avoids the temptation to sin.

Secondly, it would appear outwardly that when one is secluded in the masjid, one is automatically at a disadvantage by not being allowed to perform certain good deeds like joining in funeral prayers, attending burials, visiting the sick, etc. That is not so because according to this *Hadith* one is rewarded for these deeds even though not performing them. What a great favour from Allah!! How great is Allah's bounty! If only we can understand and properly appreciate these favours. That proper appreciation and understanding can only enter our minds when we have the true love and interest for our Deen. May Allah grant us that. Aameen.

٣. عن ابن عباس - رضي الله عنه - أنه كان معتكفاً في مسجد رسول الله ﷺ فأتاه رجل فسلم عليه ثم جلس. فقال له ابن عباس: - رضي الله عنه - يا فلان ! أراك مكتئباً حزيناً. قال:

نعم يا ابن عم رسول الله ! لفلان عليّ حق ولا حرمة صاحب هذه القبر ما أقدر عليه. قال ابن عباس: أفلا أكلمه فيك ؟ قال إن أحببت، قال: فانتعل ابن عباس ثم خرج من المسجد. قال له الرجل: أنسيت ما كنت فيه ؟ قال: لا ولكني سمعت صاحب هذا القبر ﷺ - والعهد به قريب، فدمعت عيناه - وهو يقول: من مشى في حاجة أخيه وبلغ فيها كان خيراً له من إعتكاف عشر سنين، ومن اعتكف يوماً ابتغاء وجه الله جعل الله بينه وبين النار ثلث خنادق، أبعد مما بين الخافقين - واه الطبراني في الأوسط والبيهقي واللفظ له، والحاكم مختصراً وقال صحيح الإسناد. كذا في «الترغيب» وقال السيوطي في الدر: صححه الحاكم وضعفه البيهقي

HADITH NO. 3

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه reports that while he was once performing *i'tikaaf* in the Masjidun Nabawi (Prophet's masjid), a certain man came to him, greeted him and sat down. Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه said to him: "I see that you seem sad and troubled." The man replied: "Yes, O son of the uncle of Rasulullah, I am indeed troubled in that I have an obligation to fulfil to someone. I swear by the holiness of the iftimate of this honoured resting place (Rasulullah's ﷺ grave) that I am not able to fulfil this obligation." Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه inquired: "Shall I intercede with that person on your behalf?" The man replied: "By all means, if you so wish." Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه put on his shoes and proceeded from the masjid. The man, seeing this, said: "Have you then forgotten that you are in *i'tikaaf*." With tears filling his eyes

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه replied: 'No, the time is still fresh in my mind when I heard the esteemed master of this tomb say: 'Whoever sets forth in the way of settling a necessary affair on behalf of his brother, that service shall be better for him than to perform *i'tikaaf* for ten years, and whomsoever performs *i'tikaaf* for a day, thereby seeking the pleasure of Allah, Allah will open three trenches between him and the fire of hell, the width of each trench being the 'distance between heaven and earth.'

COMMENTARY

Two things are clear from this *Hadith*. In the first place we are told, that by way of reward for one day's *i'tikaaf*, Allah opens three trenches between him and the fire of Jahannam, the width of which being the distance between the heavens and earth. In *Kashful Ghummah*, Allaama Sha'raani relates a *Hadith* wherein Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Whoever performs *i'tikaaf* for the final ten days of *Ramadhan*, for him is the reward of two Haj and two Umrahs; and whoever performs *i'tikaaf* from Maghrib until Eshaa doing nothing except performing salaah and reciting the *Qur'aan*, Allah will prepare a palace for him in Jannah."

In the second place, we are told that performing a task on behalf of one's brother brings a reward greater than ten years of *i'tikaaf*. For this reason Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه broke off his *i'tikaaf*. It was of course possible for him to continue it afterwards. What he actually did was to leave the masjid to relieve some suffering of his brother, who was greatly troubled in heart and mind. The Sufis say that Allah has sympathy with very few things as He has with a broken heart. It is for this reason that we have been so much warned of the appeals to Allah of that person whose heart we hurt through an unjust treatment and persecution.

Note that *i'tikaaf* breaks when one leaves the masjid even for a duty on behalf of a fellow Muslim. When that *i'tikaaf* is waajib, it will mean that it has to be performed all over again. Rasulullah ﷺ never left the masjid except for the calls of nature and wudhu. As for Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه leaving the masjid to do some favour to a friend it was in the same spirit that is reminiscent of that soldier lying near death on the battle field of Yarmouk, refusing to drink water until his neighbour had been given to drink. On the other hand, however, it is possible that Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه was performing nafl *i'tikaaf*, in which case it was permissible for him to break it off.

In conclusion I now wish to quote one lengthy *Hadith*. In it many virtues are mentioned, and with this do I conclude this book.

٤. عن ابن عباس - رضي الله عنه - أنه سمع رسول الله ﷺ يقول: إن الجنة لتبخر وتزير من الحول إلى الحول لدخول شهر رمضان، فإذا كانت أول ليلة من شهر رمضان هبت ريح من تحت لعرش، يقال لها المثيرة، فتصفق ورقات أشجار الجنان، وحلق لمصاريع، فيسمع طنين لم يسمع السامعون أحسن منه، فتبرز الحور لعين حتى يقفن بين شرف الجنة، فينادين: هل من خاطب إلى الله فيزوجه، ثم يقلن الحور العين: يا رضوان الجنة! ما هذا الليلة؟ فيجيبهن بالتلبية، ثم يقول: هذه أول ليلة من شهر رمضان، فتحت أبواب الجنة على الصائمين من أمة محمد ﷺ، قال: ويقول الله عز وجل: يا رضوان! افتح أبواب الجنان. ويا مالك! أغلق أبواب الجحيم على الصائمين من أمة أحمد ﷺ. ويا جبرئيل! إهبط إلى الأرض فاصفد مردة الشياطين. وغلهم بالأغلال ثم إقذفهم

في البحار حتى لا يُفسدوا على أمة محمد، حبيبي ﷺ صيامهم،
قال: ويقول الله عز وجل - في كل ليلة من شهر رمضان - لننادي
بنادي ثلاث مرات: هل من سائل فأعطيه سؤله؟ هل من تائب
فأتوب عليه؟ هل من مستغفر فأغفر له؟ من يقرض المني غير العدم
والوفي غير الظلوم. قال: والله عز وجل في كل يوم من شهر رمضان
عند الإفطار ألف ألف عتيق من النار، كلهم قد إستوجبوا النار،
فإذا كان آخر يوم من شهر رمضان أعتق الله في ذلك اليوم بقدر ما
أعتق من أول الشهر إلى آخره، وإذا كانت ليلة القدر. يأمر الله
عز وجل جبرئيل فيهبط في كبكبة من الملائكة ومعهم لواء أخضر،
فيركز اللواء على ظهر الكعبة. وله مائة جناح منها جناحان لا ينشرهما
إلا في تلك الليلة. فينشرهما في تلك الليلة فيتجاوز المشرق إلى
المغرب. فيبحث جبرئيل عليه السلام الملائكة في هذه الليلة، فيسلمون
على كل قائم وقاعد ومصل وذاكر. ويصافحونهم. ويوثقون على
دعائهم حتى يطلع الفجر. فإذا طلع الفجر ينادي جبرئيل معاشر
الملائكة! الرحيل. الرحيل. فيقولون: يا جبرئيل! ما صنع الله في
حوائج المؤمنين من أمة أحمد ﷺ؟ فيقول: نظر الله إليهم في
هذه الليلة فعفا عنهم إلا أربعة. فقلنا: يا رسول الله! من هم؟ قال:
رجل مدمن خمر، وعاق لوالديه، وقاطع رحم، ومشاحن، قلنا:
يا رسول الله! ما المشاحن؟ قال: هو المصارم، فإذا كانت ليلة
الفطر - سميت تلك الليلة ليلة الجائزة - فإذا كانت غداة الفطر
بعث الله عز وجل الملائكة في كل بلاد، فيهبطون إلى الأرض

فيقومون على أفواه السكك، فينادون بصوت يسمع من خلق الله عز وجل إلا الجن والإنس، فيقولون: يا أمة محمد أخرجوا إلى رب كريم. يعطي الجزيل. ويعفوا عن العظيم، فإذا برزوا إلى مصلاهم فيقول الله عز وجل للملائكة: ما جزاء الأجير إذا عمل عمله. قال: فتقول الملائكة: إلهنا وسيدنا! جزائه أن توفيه أجره، قال: فيقول: فإني أشهدكم يا ملائكتي! إني قد جعلت ثوابهم من صيامهم شهر رمضان وقيامهم رضائي ومغفرتي ويقول: يا عبادي! سلوني. فوعزتي وجلالي لا تسألوني اليوم شيئاً في جمعكم لآخرتكم إلا أعطيتكم. ولا لدنياكم إلا نظرت لكم فوعزتي لأسترن عليكم عثراتكم ما راقبتموني. وعزتي وجلالي لا أخزيكم ولا أفضحكم بين أصحاب الحدود، إنصرفوا مغفوراً لكم، قد أرضيتموني ورضيت عنكم، فتفرح الملائكة وتستبشر بما يعطي الله عز وجل هذه الأمة إذا أفطروا من شهر رمضان - كذا في «الترغيب» وقال: رواه أبو الشيخ ابن حبان في «كتاب الثواب» والبيهقي واللفظ له، وليس في إسناده من أجمع على ضعفه، قلت: قال السيوطي في «التدريب»: قد ألزم البيهقي أن لا يخرج في تصانيفه حديثاً يعلمه موضوعاً... إلى آخره، وذكر القاري في «المراقبة» بعض طرق الحديث ثم قال: باختلاف طرق الحديث يدل على أن له أصلاً - انتهى.

اللهم اجعلنا منهم .

time. This is indeed the month of patience, and the reward for true patience is Jannah (paradise). It is the month of sympathy with one's fellowmen. It is the month wherein a true believer's rizq is increased. Whosoever feeds another who fasted, in order to break the *fast* (at sunset), for him there shall be forgiveness for his sins and emancipation from the fire of Jahannam (hell), and for him shall be the same reward as him (whom he fed) without that person's reward being decreased in the least.' "

Thereupon we said: "O messenger of Allah, not all of us possess the means whereby we can give a fasting person to break his *fast*". The Messenger of Allah replied: 'Allah grants this same reward to him who gives a fasting person to break the *fast* a mere date or a drink of water or a sip of milk.'

'This is a month, the first of which brings Allah's Mercy, the middle of which brings His forgiveness and the last of which brings emancipation from the fire of Jahannam.'

'Whosoever lessens the burden of His servants (bondsmen) in this month, Allah will forgive him and free him from the fire of Jahannam.'

"And in this month four things you should continue to perform in great number, two of which shall be to please your Lord while the other two shall be those without which you cannot do. Those which shall be to please your Lord, are that you should in great quantity bear witness that there is no deity to worship except Allah (i.e. recite the Kalima Tayyibah: Laa ilaaha il'lal Laah) and make much Istighfaar (beg Allah's forgiveness with Astaghfirullah)." "And as for those without which you cannot do, you should beg of Allah, entrance into paradise and seek refuge in Him from Jahannam."

"And whoever gave a person who fasted water to drink, Allah shall grant him to drink from my fountain, such a drink whereafter he shall never again feel thirsty until he enters Jannah."

Reported by ibn Khuzaimah in his Sahih.

Ibn Abbas ؓ says that he heard our Nabi ﷺ say: "Verily Jannah becomes perfumed with the sweetest fragrance in *Ramadhan*. From the beginning of the year till the end, it is being brightly decorated for the coming of this blessed month. And when the first night of *Ramadhan* appears, a wind blows from beneath the Arsh (Throne). It is called Mutheera and causes the leaves of the trees of Jannah to rustle and door handles to sound, whereby setting forth such a melodious sound as had never been heard before. The dark eyed damsels of Jannah then step forth till they appear in the centre of the balconies of Jannah, exclaiming: "Is there anyone making duaa to Allah for us that Allah may join us in marriage to him?" Then these damsels call out: "O Ridwaan, Keeper of Jannah, what night is this?" He replies: "Labbaik, this is indeed the first night of *Ramadhan*, when the doors of Jannah are opened to those who observe the *fast* from among the ummah of Muhammad ﷺ." Rasulullah ﷺ further said: "Allah says: "O Ridwaan, open the doors of Jannah and O Maalik, (keeper of Jahannam) close the doors of Jahannam for those who *fast* from among the ummah of Ahmad ﷺ. O Jibra'il proceed down to the earth and bind all the rebellious shaytaans, put them in chains and cast them in the oceans so that they make no mischief, thereby spoiling the *fast* of the ummah of My beloved Muhammad ﷺ."

Allah commands a caller from the heavens to call out three times on every one of the nights of *Ramadhan*: "Is there anyone begging of Me that I may grant him his desire? Is there anyone repenting to Me that I may turn in Mercy to him? Is there anyone begging for forgiveness that I may forgive him? Who is there who shall give a loan to the One; whose wealth does not diminish, and the One; who duly fulfills without unjust deductions."

Rasulullah ﷺ said further: "Every day at the time of iftaar Allah sets free one thousand souls from the fire of Jahannam, all of whom had already earned entrance into Jahannam. On the last night He sets free as many as had been set free throughout the month. On the night of *Laylatul Qadr* Allah commands Jibra'il AS. to descend to the earth with a group of Malaa'ikah. They descend

carrying a green flag which is then planted on top of the Ka'bah. Jibra'il AS. himself has one hundred wings, two of which are only spread out on this night. He spreads out these two wings so that their width extends from east to west. Jibra'il alayhis salaam then sends out the Malaa'ikah in all directions to recite salaam upon everybody they find standing in prayer or sitting, performing salaah and celebrating the praises of Allah. They shake hands with them and say Aameen to all their duaas until dawn breaks. When dawn comes, Jibra'il AS., calls out: Depart O Malaa'ikah of Allah, depart."

The Malaa'ikah then inquire: "O Jibra'il but what did Allah do regarding the needs that the faithful ones from among the ummah of Ahmad ﷺ put before Him?" Jibra'il AS. replies: "Allah looked at them with Mercy and pardoned them all except four kinds of people."

Thereupon, we the sahaaba inquired: "Who are they, O Rasulullah ﷺ replied: "They are the ones who are addicted to wine drinking, those disobedient to their parents, those who cut themselves off from their near relatives and those who harbour ill-feelings in their hearts against their fellow brethren and break off relations with them."

"And then the night of Eidul Fitr, the night that is called Laylatul Jaa'izah, (the night of prize giving), comes along. On the morning of Eid, Allah sends down the Malaa'ikah to all the lands of the earth where they take their positions, calling out with a voice that is heard by all except men and jinn: "O ummah of Muhammad, come forth from your houses towards a Lord that is Noble and Gracious, Who grants much and pardons the major sins." When they proceed forward towards the places for their Eid salaah, Allah says to the Malaa'ikah: "What indeed is the reward of that employee who had rendered his services?" The Malaa'ikah reply: "O our Lord and Master, it is only right that he shall receive his reward in full for his services."

Allah then says: "I call you to witness, O My Malaa'ikah, that for their having fasted for Me during the month of *Ramadhan*, and for their having stood before Me in prayer by night, I have granted to them as reward My pleasure and have granted them forgiveness. O My servants, ask now of Me, for I swear by My Honour and Greatness, that whatsoever you shall beg of Me this day in this assembly of yours for the needs of your Hereafter, I shall grant you, and whatsoever you shall ask for your worldly needs, I shall look at you favourably. By My Honour, do I swear, as long as you shall obey My commands, I shall cover your faults. By My Honour and My greatness do I swear, that I shall never disgrace you among the evil-doing ones and disbelievers. Depart now from here; you are forgiven. You have indeed pleased Me and I am pleased with you.

The Malaa'ikah, on seeing this great reward bestowed upon the ummah of Muhammad ﷺ become greatly pleased and happy."

(O Allah make us also of those fortunate ones. Aameen.)

COMMENTARY

The previous pages of this book have already dealt with almost all that is contained in this last long *Hadiith*. A few points need attention. We see here that there are a few people who are deprived of forgiveness in *Ramadhan* and are unfortunate indeed in not being able to share the great gifts of Allah on the morning of Eid. Among them are those who fight and argue among themselves and those disobedient to their parents.

Let us put one question to them: "You have displeased Allah and having done so, what other refuge do you now have besides Allah?" We feel indeed sad that for some reason or other you have made yourselves the target for the curse of Allah, His Rasul ﷺ and Jibra'il AS., while at the same time being excluded from Allah's freely granted forgiveness. Who else can now grant you refuge? Who and what can stand by your side when you carry the curse of Rasulullah ﷺ? Who can help you when even he had made *duaa* against you?

I implore you my dear brothers (and sisters), think about your position at this moment. Think, and desist from all that draws you away from Allah. There is time to repair and repent and now is that time. Tomorrow you shall have to stand before a Judge before whom no rank, honour, position and wealth shall avail you—a Judge before whom only actions shall count and Who is aware of our every movement. Remember that Allah may forgive our faults as far as our relationship with Him is concerned, but will not forgive without penalty, our faults in our relations with our fellow-men.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: "The bankrupt one from among my ummah is that person, who shall appear on the day of Qiyaamah, bringing with him righteous deeds like salaah, soom (*Fast*) and charity. However he had also sworn at someone, falsely accused someone else and hurt someone, with the result that all these people shall come forward with actions against him, bearing witness against him. As a penalty his good deeds shall be taken away and granted to the afflicted ones. And when his good deeds shall come to an end, in this manner, their sins, shall be thrown upon him (when he is not able to pay the full penalty through lack of good deeds). Hence in this manner he shall enter Jahannam". So we see, that in spite of many good deeds, he shall fail. (O Allah save us from that.)

Another point is worth emphasising in this connection. Numerous times we have read about so many deeds through which forgiveness comes. The question now arises that when forgiveness is being granted, why should it be granted time and again? In other words, once a person had been forgiven, there are no sins left on him. So why is forgiveness granted again? The answer to that is that when forgiveness comes to a person with sins on him, it will mean those sins are wiped away, but when he has no sins it will mean that mercy is granted to him.

A further interesting point to note is that Allah time and again calls the Malaa'ikah to witness. The question may arise: Why is that so? Here one should bear in mind that, that is the way the affairs of Qiyaamah at the time of reckoning have been laid down that a

witness shall be brought forward to testify. Hence the Rasuls shall be required to bring witnesses as to whether they had delivered the message. Very often our Nabi ﷺ used to say: "Verily you shall be asked about me (and my mission). So bear witness that I did deliver the message."

In Bukhari we read a *Hadith*: "On the day of Qiyaamah Nooh alayhis salaam shall be called and asked: 'Did you deliver the message in the proper manner?' He shall reply: 'Yes I did'. Then his ummah shall be asked: "Did he deliver the message?" They shall reply: "No, neither did a bringer of glad tidings come to us nor did a warner." Thereupon Nooh alayhis salaam shall be called to bring a witness. He shall call upon Muhammad's (ﷺ) ummah. This ummah shall be called forward and they shall testify (as to the truth of Nooh alayhis salaam's evidence.)

In some versions of this *Hadith* this ummah shall be cross questioned: "How do you know that Nooh alayhis salaam did deliver the commands of Allah, when you were not present at the time?" They shall reply: "Our Nabi ﷺ informed us of that. The Book of Truth revealed to him informed us of that."

In this same manner all the Ambiyaa shall be questioned. For this the *Qur'aan Karim* says:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ﴾

"Thus we made you an ummah, justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations."

Imaam Raazi writes that on the day of Qiyaamah there shall be four types of witnesses:

a. The Malaa'ikah. The *Qur'aan* says:

﴿إِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾

"And there will come forth every soul; with each will be (an angel) to bear witness." (L: 21)

"Not a word does he utter but there is a Sentinel by him ready (to note)" (L: 18)

"But verily over you (are appointed angels) to protect you, kind and honourable, writing down your deeds; that they know and understand all that you do." (LXXXIII: 12)

b. The Ambiyaa. The Qur'aan says:

﴿وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ﴾

﴿فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا﴾

"And I was a witness over them while I dwelt among them." (V: 120)

"And how shall it be when we shall bring forth every nation with its witness, and shall bring you forth, O Prophet, as witness over these (the ummah)?"

c. The ummah of Muhammad ﷺ The following verse refers to this:

﴿وَجِئْنَا بِالنَّبِيِّ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ﴾

"The Prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward."

d. The part of man's body. Thus the Qur'aan states:

﴿الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَى أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا ... الْآيَةُ﴾

"That day shall we set a seal on their mouths; but their hands will speak to us and their feet bear witness to all they did."

(XXXVI: 65)

The last *Hadith* under discussion also brings out one joyous message to the fortunate ones. Allah says that He shall not disgrace and humiliate those who performed their duties in front of (and among) the unbelievers and evil doers. Is not that in itself a great favour? Further He shall hide our faults and not reveal it to them.

Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه reports that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "On the day of Qiyaamah Allah shall call a believer to draw near to Him. A curtain shall be drawn so that none may see. Allah shall then remind him of each and every fault of his which he shall be obliged to admit. Seeing the great amount of his faults, that person shall feel that he had indeed failed and shall perish. But then Allah shall say: "In the world did I cover your faults and today too do I hide them and forgive them for you." Thereafter his book of good deeds shall be given to him.

The contents of this *Hadith* is contained in so many other Ahaadith as well. One should therefore be careful of not humiliating and attacking the righteous ones for their faults. It is also possible that we may be the real losers through backbiting and jeering at those who in their own manner seek to please Allah. It is possible that Allah may cover their faults and forgive them through the blessings of their other good deeds, while we who continue to backbite, scoff and jeer at them, may be the cause of our destruction. (May Allah in His Mercy pardon us all.)

This *Hadith* also states that the night before the day of Eid is called the night of prize-giving, the night when Allah gives the true reward. This night too should be properly appreciated. It is also common that once the announcement has been made that tomorrow is Eid, the majority of us on this night enjoy ourselves in sleep, whereas this too is a night that should be spent in ibaadah. Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Whoever remains awake for ibaadah on the night (preceding Eid), with the aim of gaining reward, his heart shall not die on that day when hearts shall die." The meaning here

is that at the time when evil will have taken possession of all, his heart shall stay alive (guarded against evil) and keep him away from evil. It may also refer to the time when the bugle shall be blown to herald on the day of Qiyaamah. On that day his soul shall not become unconscious.

Rasulullah ﷺ is also reported to have said: "Whoever stays awake for ibaadah on the following nights shall enter Jannah: Laylatut Tarwiyah (the night after the seventh Zil Hijjah), Laylatul Arafa (the night after the eighth Zil Hajjah), Laylatun Nahr (the night after the ninth day of Zil Hijjah), the night preceding Eidul-Fitr and the night preceding the 15th of Sha'baan.

The jurists of Islam have written that it is mustahab to remain in ibaadah on both the nights of Eid. Imaam Shaafi'ee is reported to have said that duaas are answered on the nights of Friday (the night after the day of Thursday), the two Eids and on the night preceding the fifteenth of Sha'baan.

Among the pious in Islam, it is said that because of the exceptional greatness of Friday night, one should spend this night in ibaadah during the month of *Ramadhan*. But there are some Ahaadith wherein we are prohibited from fixing only that night for ibaadah, it is best that one or two other nights should be joined with it.

I have now come to the end of this book, in conclusion, hoping that this shall be of benefit to those who seek Allah's pleasure, I beg and implore all readers to make dua'a for me, the humble writer of these pages, during those special hours of *Ramadhan*. Do mention me too in your duaas and beg of Allah that He in His Infinite Grace and Mercy also bestow His Mercy and pleasure upon me. Aameen.

COMMENTARY

All the points to which this *Hadith* draws attention have been further emphasised in numerous other Ahaadith on the great virtues of *Ramadhan*. Quite a number of important points are brought to our notice.

Firstly, it should be noted that Rasulullah ﷺ delivered this sermon at the end of the month of Sha'baan, the obvious reason being that he intended to put into our minds the great importance of *Ramadhan* so that we on our side could remember and not allow one second of it to go by without giving it the true spirit it deserves. Thereafter attention is drawn to *Laylatul Qadr*, about which more is said later. Then attention is drawn to the fact that fasting has been made compulsory by Allah Who also made sunnah the Taraweeh salaah by night.

From this *Hadith* it is noted that the command for Taraweeh prayers too comes from Allah Himself. All the authorities of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah are agreed upon the fact that Taraweeh is sunnah.

Maulana Shah Abdulhaq Dehlawi wrote in his book "Maa Thabata Bis Sunnah" that should the people of any town fail to perform Taraweeh prayers, the Muslim ruler should make them do so by force.

Here one point should be noted: Many are of the opinion that one may listen to the *Qur'aan* being recited in a certain masjid, whereafter the virtue of the sunnah will have been attained. This is wrong. There are two things: Firstly, it is sunnah to hear the full *Qur'aan* being recited in Taraweeh in *Ramadhan*. Secondly, it is sunnah to perform Taraweeh salaah throughout *Ramadhan*. Both should be performed with care.

As for those who are on a journey and unable to perform both sunan, because of not knowing where they will be (at different places). Then it is advisable that in the first few days of *Ramadhan* they should have the full *Qur'aan* read in Taraweeh so that it does not remain incompletely recited. Then they should attend Taraweeh wherever they find the opportunity.